

ROMANCE ^{AND} REVERY



EDGAR FAWCETT

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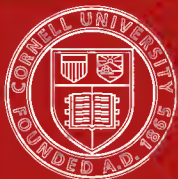
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ROMANCE AND REVERY

POEMS

By EDGAR FAWCETT



BOSTON
TICKNOR AND COMPANY

1886
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University Press :
JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE.

To my Friend,
WILLIAM HENRY RIDEING,
IN MEMORY OF HAPPY DAYS
BOTH HERE AND ABROAD,
This Book
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

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ROMANCE AND REVERY.

THE MAGIC FLOWER.

DEEP in a land of heavy-foliaged heights,
Clear-cloven of one fair lordly river, stood
A palace made for manifold delights
And compassed by a noble-towering wood.
Here lived (how anciently were hard to tell)
A king whom all his people honored well.

And years before that time his worshipped wife,
A queen Madonna-browed and saintly-eyed,
With anguish had surrendered life for life,
But momentarily a mother ere she died;
And now within these palace-walls dwelt one,
A princess, with long tresses like the sun.

Ethereal in her symmetry, and tall,
And graceful as a lily when breeze-bent,
She moved among her maidens, over all
Supreme for dignity and sweetness blent,
With neither costly robe nor jewel rare
To match the marvels of her eyes and hair.

Some influence from her mother's watchful soul
Inseparably round the Princess breathed,
And seemed, at times, a shadowy aureole
Among her glimmering tresses faintly wreathed ;
And it was told that where she slept by night
A Presence watched her, made from misty light !

Her countenance no woodland creature saw
But straightway, on that instant, it became
Obedient to some mysterious law,
And followed if she called it, meekly tame ;
And rose-vines round an oriel in her room
Were bright with fadeless fealty of bloom !

Now the good King, her father, having thought
How wondrously his child was pure and fair,
Desponded that the drift of fate had brought
His throne the blessing of no lineal heir ;
For in this land whereof he held the throne,
No woman might aspire to reign alone.

But he to whom a princess gave her hand
When brotherless and born the eldest, might
(So ran the old sacred statutes of the land)
Reign monarch by indisputable right.
And meditating that his death drew near,
The King was smitten with a grievous fear.

“For who among our courtiers noblest-born
Deserves,” he mused, “to wed this matchless maid?
Lo! is it frivolous Rolf, whom gems adorn?
Or stripling Bertram, of the spleenful blade?
Or Ronald, of the ringlets? or, yet worse,
Young black-browed Otho, of the gamester’s purse?

“Ah, none of these! And surely on our realm
Are fallen most evil days! True men no more,
Guileless of heart, invincible of helm,
Prop the proud throne with counsel, as of yore!
That mightier-limbed and lofty-thoughted race
Has past, and weak successors hold its place.

“Gentle, heroic, temperate, simply great,
Were those of whom our treasured legends tell,—
Columnar spirits, on whose strength our state
Was builded and upborne, whate’er befell!
Calm fortresses, round whose repose and pride
The assailant waves of discord broke and died!

“ But now what mockeries meet and taunt me here !
How shattered are this people that I rule !
How airily grave statecraft lends an ear
To jinglings of the bell-besprinkled fool !
How lighter than its wearer’s giddy sports
The gay plume flashes in my fountained courts ! ”

Thus musing, from his casement glanced the King
Where monstrous oaks o’ershadowed a green lawn
Dappled with sunbeams richly flickering,
And there, serene beside a star-eyed fawn,
He marked his child, — a shape of virgin grace,
Standing white-vestured in that cloistral place.

“ Daughter whom I so cherish,” thought the sire,
“ Sweet living semblance of thy mother dead,
What man, however princely, ought aspire
To share my great crown with thy hallowed head ?
Better than mateless marriage for thy doom,
Death’s kisses and the bride-bed of the tomb ! ” . . .

Later by some few days, throughout the land
A loudening rumor passed ; and these who heard
Were credulous of what the King had planned,
But those disdainfully believed no word ;
And lastly, while men trusted or denied,
The voice of proclamation sounded wide.

And thus it spoke: "*To all the truth is known,
So often in song or story sung or told,
Of how for many a century has blown
In some high fastness or deep-tangled wold
Of these wide-looming hills that round us tower,
The hidden splendors of a Magic Flower.*"

"*Yet no man breathes to-day whose eyes have seen
The covert where its mystic charms endure;
And through past ages it has only been
A vision for the marvellously pure.
And if the seeker's life wear spot or stain,
Though for a life he seek, he shall not gain.*"

"*So radiant this enchanted Flower, it seems
A fair star fallen upon the earth's dull breast!
For dying searchers of old time in dreams
Beheld it after years of empty quest;
But even who truly saw, in that far day,
Lacked the white sinlessness to bear away.*"

"*Now, therefore, doth the reigning King proclaim
That if within his ample realm be one
(Whether of lofty lineage and proud name,
Or lowliest of all men beneath the sun)
Who brings the famed Flower to the palace-gate,
Him doth a princess and a throne await."*

So heralded, the royal message ran ;
And wonder filled the people, and for days
No man throughout the realm encountered man
But each his judgment spoke, with eager phrase :
And all believed for surety, worst and best,
He lived not who might venture on the quest.

But they whose pleasure was in careless thought,
And flippant speech, and fashion's random aims,
And robes of price fantastically wrought,
And railleries among the beauteous dames, —
These gentry of the palace, when they heard,
Grew merry, jesting with the royal word.

And where, with purple, gold or scarlet dress,
Down vistas that the elm and oak made dark,
In luxury, in languor and idlesse,
Gallant and lady roamed the leafy park,
Such lightsome scoffs were on the lips of these
That peals of ringing laughter pierced the trees.

“ Poor trustful King ! ” compassionated they,
Mirth cheapening the pity of their tone ;
“ He dreams, forsooth, to-day is yesterday,
Unmindful that the world is older grown
And far more wise than, taking false for true,
Wills-o'-the-wisp whole lifetimes to pursue ! ”

Thus jeeringly they spoke ; but neither King
Nor Princess heard an echo of their jeers.
Yet one, a simple vassal, hearkening,
His pain had fitly told with sighs and tears,
Because there dwelt within his patient breast
Much reverential honor of the quest.

But latterly these pomps of court he knew,
Brought thither by a selfish kinsman old,
Who from plebeian life had risen, and who
Willed that to none their kinship should be told ;
Since he, the King's High Steward, ill could bear
Such blood as this poor serving-lad's to share.

And yet, though hardened, like so many lives
Girt constantly with jars of warring needs, —
Where this man hilt to hilt with that man strives
And heartless comment hails the first who bleeds, —
Though grasping, worldly, ruthless, he had made
The vow for which his dying sister prayed.

To guard her orphan son had been that vow, —
Thus far but lightly kept, if kept in truth ;
For seldom save at secret meeting, now,
He looked with heedful glance upon the youth,
Nor noted then, so slight and cold his care,
Deep eyes and shapely frame and modest air.

Nor did he dream that in a month's brief space
Among all fellow-servitors had grown
Love for the lad's mild manners and calm face
And culture of sweet speech unlike their own ;
How even the rudest in his sight felt shame,
And strangely coarseness was not where he came.

Though sprung in truth from parentage obscure,
Since boyhood he had far excelled his kind,
Having a soul pre-eminently pure,
A glowing faith, a large and limpid mind,
A heart unsoiled of envies, greeds or hates,
Lifted in loveliness above its mates !

Yet none than he with humbler spirit bore
The part 't was fortune's pleasure to assign,
Waiting in chamber and in corridor,
Serving at feast the garnet-colored wine ;
Standing at throne-foot on grand audience-days,
Immovable below the crown's rich blaze.

High in the highest of those palace-towers
His room was reared, aloof from passers' heed ;
And here at morning or at midnight hours
Greatly it pleased him to muse and read,
Above the dense trees bowering the broad lawns,
Up near the wan stars or the damask dawns !

Released one midnight from the festal shine
Where courtiers revelled late with noisy zest,
By many a coil of stairway serpentine
At last he reached the chamber of his rest,
And found the placid place with moonbeams lit,
As though dead lilies' souls were haunting it.

O'er all the meagre plainness of the room
A spell of soft aerial silver reigned ;
But bold there gleamed from out its dubious gloom
A griffon-crested casement, mullion-paned.
And he drew slowly near the casement's edge,
Leaning an arm upon the stony ledge.

Cloudless above him vastly curved the night,
Where deep on deep of glowing heaven was laid ;
Below, the illumined river with its light
Pierced the remote solemnities of shade,
As though the lands, for many a meadowed mile,
Parted their dark lips in one dazzling smile !

Broad open soon he flung the casement-panes,
And felt the breezes hurrying cool and fleet,
Sweet as fresh waters to his fevered veins,
To brow and eyelids delicately sweet,
Breathe of their distant native hills that rose,
In monumental vagueness of repose.

And now aloft he raised both eager arms,
While on his face the summer moon fell fair,
Showing it sad for sorrow such as harms
More deeply by despondence than despair; . . .
Then suddenly, before his lifted sight,
A meteor dropt along the monstrous night.

“Perchance,” he murmured, “as an omen sent,
This wild star, fading on the sky’s blue scope,
May symbol mockery and disheartenment
To my presumptuous and insensate hope!
The great hills call me with air-whispers cool . . .
Heaven answers from disdainful heights: ‘Thou fool!’

“Ah! what is my poor trivial aim to theirs,
The aspirant souls that strongly strove and died,
Guerdonless after many toilful cares,
With effort ceaselessly unsatisfied?
Brave souls, like meteors, in audacious flight
Breaking their hearts of fire along the night!

“These fought and failed. . . . Shall I not fail as they?
Though victory’s hidden paradise be sweet,
In vain for centuries might the searcher stray,
To grope through dizzying vistas of defeat!
Ah! no; the better lives thus vainly spent,
Crush courage with their weight of precedent!”

And now he turned, those dreary words being said,
And many times along the chamber dim
Paced with close-folded arms, with low-drooped head,
Doubt and belief at bitter war in him ;
And ever while he paced, the fluttering air
Played in long tender waftures through his hair

An hour so fled, and at its end he stood
Again beside the casement, and had now
Grown from tumultuous into grave of mood,
With record of resolve on lips and brow.
And presently the voice wherewith he spoke
Depths of sweet-sounding earnestness awoke :

“ In vain, dead searchers, ye have never died !
Your failure wears the glory of success !
Better in great things to have greatly tried
Than loftily to have achieved in less !
Low ye are fallen, and yet your fame shall dwell
Proud as the fearless distances ye fell !

“ Of waves that buffet some bold steep of stone,
Not those which round the rigid bases curl
Would fitly meet it, but that wave alone
Which climbs to perish in a mist of pearl !
Though while it dies the sea-bird mocks its roar,
Ocean is glad of it from shore to shore !

“ Be mine the effort, though the fall be mine,
And never it is given my feet to near
The fairy fastness where that bloom divine
Stars its still solitude from year to year!
I shall go forth ere warbles the first lark
And morning murmurs through the palace-park!

“ I shall go forth, on hope’s glad mission bound,
Heedless though I be journeying to despair;
As, while deep-plunged within some cave profound,
Some torch-flame to the last will crimson air!
So, till despair’s black void shall bid it fade,
Hope shall be hope, unquenched and undismayed!

“ And ah! hope-strengthening, there shall still abide
The fervor of that dream which late has grown
A shadow-like attendance at my side,
Wed to my life as to a flute its tone!
O thou, pure perfectly, above all blame,
Even thought bows reverence to name thy name!

“ What wonder if the wild quest that I dare,
Look promise-laden after those dull days
In which with calm and silence I would bear
The unhappy doom no utterance could phrase?—
Her my poor creatureship so high above
Loving with love that was so rashly love!

“ Oft have I climbed to this room’s lonesome height
And wept hot tears that I would shame to weep,
Striving across my soul’s clear-seen delight
To draw the obscuring drapery of sleep,
As one might rise and make his window dim,
Wakeful for some low gold moon watching him.

“ Yet all my patient strivings were as naught,
And not again the old peace was ever won,
And always to its lofty love my thought
Staid loyal as the sunflower to its sun :
While she, that knew not of this woful thrall,
Knew not moreover if I was at all !

“ Then came at last my golden day of days !
Her yearly birth-feast gleamed with royal wealth ;
I, kneeling low beneath her maiden gaze
While the great King and courtiers pledged her health,
Proffered the jewelled cup she leaned and took,
Blessing me while she leaned with one bright look !

“ A moment, and her sweet eyes turned from mine,
Claimed of subservient throngs on either hand ;
But in my veins the glad blood leapt like wine,
And amorous music made the air turn bland,
While through the music borne, a vague voice said :
‘ For that she knows thou art, be comforted ! ’

“ Always thenceforward, wheresoe’er we met,
I found some slight sign on her face that told
How yet I was remembered, and how yet
The precious memory had not waxen cold;
But on bare sward gleams April’s earliest kiss
Not faintlier than the smile that told me this !

“ And now I seemed as one whose joyful sight
Sees lines of dull and beetling cliff disclose
Reaches of pasture, affluent with light,
Wooded and watered for a god’s repose, —
Though, while within his breast desire burns hot,
’T is fate that valleyward he wander not !

“ Still, sight is given for rapture. . . . So, akin,
Knowledge that now seemed knowledge, now surmise,
Made it not all mere misery to have been,
‘ Filled life not wholly with dissentient sighs.
Dark frowned the crags ; but dells whence odors came,
Busied their bird-throats with my carolled name !

“ No longer was it strange that I grew bold,
Believing much and fondly fancying more,
My days to one rich dreamy cadence rolled,
‘ She loves thee ! ’ ‘ loves thee ! ’ ‘ loves thee ! ’ o’er and o’er ..
No longer was it strange that passion strong
Sundered restraint and blossomed into song !

“ Dropt on that shadowed path which bough and bole
Picture at ending with a reach of sky,
Where always 't is her evening wish to stroll
Companionless, I let these poor words lie,
Known but for color from some oak's fallen leaf,
And yet no lightlier touched with tints of grief:

“ ‘ *If flowers have been that never saw the sun,
Or birds, fleet-plumed, that never voyaged air,
Or well-wrought lutes, unplayed by any one,
Or faultless women that no man called fair ;
If these things ever have been, my heart brings
A hopeless dream, to match it with these things !*

“ ‘ *Even as a corpse, my dream, with shrouded face,
Is borne where no light falls, no breeze may stir,
Is borne in sorrowing silence to the place
Of cold serene eternal sepulchre !
Lift not the enfolding cerements, lest thou weep,
Moved by the pathos of its marble sleep !*

“ ‘ *For since on thy pure life no blame should rest,
Because thou wert but worshipped from afar
With longing such as when the sea's prone breast
Throbs incommunicably to some star,
Surely that thou shouldst mourn my dream when dead,
Nothing hereafter shall have profited !'*

“Thus plaintive ran the song that I had wrought;
And watchful of the dim path where it lay,
I lingered on till cool-aired evening brought
The Princess, gliding in her graceful way:
Unseen I lingered, and unseen erelong
I saw her white hand hovering o’er the song.

“But straightway then I felt quick terror draw
Thrill after thrill from faltering heart to brain,
And strangely, as with altered vision, saw
This, my late act, rash, insolent and vain;
Then fled, like one whom some sharp wound provokes,
Fleet-footed through the labyrinthine oaks.

“With poignance of unspeakable regret
For folly such as wakened wisdom shows,
Tireless amid the hours until we met,
Self-accusation dealt its deadly blows;
And on the morrow my wrung spirit knew
How night’s black prophecies were proven true!

“For even as one who loves a wild-wood place
Because of leafy charms he has often seen,
Yet misses now a well-remembered grace
Wind-ravaged from its garlandries of green;
So, passing her, I marked the clear eyes grown
To one calm blank avoidance of my own.

“ All beauty engirt her sweetly, as of old ;
But now no dear regardful gleam was lent
To light, in their smooth harmony of mould,
Unsullied brow or classic lineament.

And morrow, lapsing into morrow, bare
Fresh fagots to the flame of my despair !

“ For since my love had ventured from the first
No height of hope more daring than to show
The unspoken curse wherewith its life was curst,
The knowledge of that joy 't was death to know,
Meaning not bolder by the song's late strain
Than when some wearied captive moves his chain ;

“ Since I the lowliest part had willed to play,
And homage not unseemlier to allege
Than those rich flowers that bloom in bright array
Perpetually round her casement's edge,
Thrilling, I doubt not, through each burdened stem
If her benignant eyes approve of them, —

“ Now, therefore, that I sought this mediate sense
Between cold vassalage and love's warm phrase,
Yet proffered but a menial's insolence,
Jeered from the encircling world on all my days !
The brutes, the flowers, earth, water, sky or air
Had right of reverence that I could not share !

“ And so in drear disquietude I past

Through hours of darkness whose appointed end
Seemed possible alone when death at last

The shade of its austerer gloom should send, —
Till that strange message, loud along the land,
Cheered like the waving of a far white hand !

“ Lo, now the patriarch King proclaims ! and lo,
Disloyalty contemns his high decree !

Yet on the wild quest men refuse I go, —

I go, nor shall much toil dishearten me !
Hide well, strange haughty Flower, that wondrous crest !
Another life is arming for thy quest !

“ Powers of the darkness, Powers of the wind or light,
Mysterious, masterful, whate’er ye are

That shroud this peerless bloom from mortal sight

As black-winged thunder shrouds a sparkling star,
Does now, while mountainward my words are borne,
Scorn on dim awful faces answer scorn ?

“ In some still cavern, sacred to your spells,

Group ye, with knit brows and strong folded arms,
The resolute unpitying sentinels

Whom this my purpose grieves not nor alarms ?
Or do ye sigh that one more life should spend
Bright-blooded youth toward an empty end ?

"Spirits, I may not know if pity fills

Your hearts with lenient heed of my heart's woe;
Or if ye keep alike for all men's ills

Unvarying scorn, Spirits, I may not know!
But whether hate or whether love be yours,
Be mine the zeal that till I die endures!" . . .

Thus having murmured, ere an hour he stood

Where moon-made arabesques lay sweet to see
Under the breezy leafage of that wood

Which reared on all sides many a massive tree;
Nor lingered long, but fared till far away
The royal towers loomed huge in breaking day.

Before him, at the horizon, waved the clear

Bough-vestured contour of those hills he sought,
Here broken with meadowy intervals, and here

In spaces of long shadowy forest wrought,
Their summits turbaned with pale misty fleece,
Dawn-flushed and plastic to the wind's caprice.

Now on toward those majestic hills he bore;

And just at noon he knelt beside a spring
Set like a jewel in a glade's green floor,

And drank, and heard the mavis carolling,
Or close at hand the rich euphonious boom
Of wild bees revelling in a brake of bloom.

And now it seemed that all sweet sounds or sights
Were touched with pensiveness in tone or hue,
Here at the land-rim whence those wooded heights
Billowed immense against the northern blue ;
From sky-tint, bird-song, leaf-gloss or wind-swell
Farewell reiterating soft farewell !

For he had gained that limit whence began
Perchance the unchanging doom of keen unrest. . . .
And here the annalist would vainly scan
By separate episodes his patient quest,
Since each day's fresh toil brought, in weary way,
Laborious likeness to its yesterday.

And time went flowing along, but he was now
A wanderer still, his stubborn hope not dead,
Wearing maturer signs on cheek and brow,
Bounteously bearded and wild-garmented ;
Older by years, and yet with youth well seen
In stalwart stature and in virile mien.

No constant home for night or day was his ;
With none to heed where he might pause, whence flit,
His life was even as some fleet mute life is,
Ignorant that its own shade follows it ;
And ever, where he staid to sleep, the spot
Through all its myriad morrows knew him not.

For drink the mountain streams gave crystal store,
The foliaged wildernesses gave for food
Snared game, and berries that its bushes bore,
And many a savage herb or root-growth rude;
And the steep lands he roamed for slumber gave
Countless complexities of pass and cave.

Nor through those lands did winter work large ill:
Snows came not, or fell lightly if they fell;
Whence in all seasons he might search at will
Summit by summit or deep dell by dell;
And wherefore seldom was he doomed to dare
The wilder savageries of earth and air.

Sandalled he was in strong-thonged rugged wise,
And clothed with sturdy skins of his own spoil,
Flexile the girth of shoulder and of thighs
To raiment fitly for his mountain toil, —
Seeming, apparelled thus, a shape that trod
Guardian of those acclivities and god!

But mercilessly glided on the years,
And yet the elusive guerdon was not gained;
And moods possessed him now of lonely tears,
Like blood-drops from his heart's hot centre drained;
And age, that spares no mortal strength of limb,
Became as unseen shackles clasping him.

Then, while hope withered in his wearied breast,
And his dead youth a phantom summons grew,
Valleyward luring him, since life at best
Of unborn days held meagre residue,
Still he staid firm, and with unfailing will
Wrought him a staff, and weakly wandered still.

“For now,” he mused, “the end is near and sure;
The story of my long quest is all but told;
My life, a tremulous leaf, hangs insecure;
Death’s wind is fluttering round its languid hold.
Let my short future fitly crown my past,
Resolute, sacrificial, till the last!” . . .

So the rude hills yet held him, now no more
Going light of foot along their wavy ways,
Feebler of step while ever onward wore
The hours of those inexorable days; —
Half glad to feel his futile searching cease,
Half eager for death’s darkness and its peace.

Then it befell at last, one fatal morn,
That after wakening he essayed to rise,
And moaning a great hollow moan forlorn,
Sank backward with white lips and glassy eyes,
While round the rock-built vaultage where he lay
The careless dawn became the careless day.

Prone with exceeding faintness did he lie
Till evening, and at evening was aware
That sounds of solemn storm were in the sky,
And gusty spasms were shaking the dim air;
And while he listened his desire grew deep
Forth from the shadow-haunted cave to creep.

So, panting hard and straining his poor strength,
He dragged his nerveless body pace by pace,
And under the dull windy heaven at length
Crouched in the bleak light of an open place;
And then, while fierce gales tossed his whitened hair,
Girt with the growing storm, he prayed this prayer :

“Stern warders of the Flower, I charge you, hear !
Witness, I charge, the death-damp on my brow !
I, impotent, that many a dauntless year
Strode on through thorny failure, perish now !
And yet, imperious bafflers, while I die,
Even this deep thunder shall not drown my cry !

“For lo, I freight with fervor of appeal
The black wings of the tempest ! Lo, I make
These weak lips, that death seals with frigid seal,
A voice above the rumbling cloud-heights wake !
By all my long hope’s long unanswered need,
Spirits invisible, I charge you, heed !

“ If yet she lives, that saintly and lovely soul
In whose dear service I have faltered not,
Attaining this my untriumphant goal
Here at the limit of my woful lot,
Grant me to find her feet, and kneeling tell
How mine fared faithful till the hour I fell !

“ Grant me thus much, O ye that have denied
All else with changeless calm of disregard !
Yet deem not, thus demanding, that I chide
Your ways of hidden will, however hard,
Nor doubt remembrance of my toil has lent
Victory to mine hour of vanquishment !

“ For though indeed this life shall straightway pass,
And the unborn morrow’s first faint rosy ray
Shall find me dumb as granite on the grass,
While chance winds breathe above my pulseless clay,
This down-flung husk and sheath of what was I
Sepulchred only of the arching sky ;

“ Although, perchance, before a month shall end,
My naked bones lie pale, my body turn
Dust-booty for the frivolous gales to send
Anywhither, in antic unconcern ;
Still, that I strove and faltered not, shall stand
Beyond the ruin of corruption’s hand ! ” . . .

There through the strange tempestuous dusk rose high
His fervent words till even the last was said. . . .
Then rolled the thunder, like a god's reply,
Reverberate and voluminous overhead ;
But ere the echo of the peal was done,
Turmoil and silence to his ears were one !

And while the strengthening storm-wrack's abrupt night
Disfeatured all that mountainous domain,
Above him abject rioted the might
Of ruffian blasts that whirled the sheeted rain ;
And momentarily, unnoted of his eyes,
The lawless lightning rent the livid skies !

Long horribly raved the tempest, and long staid
The startling interchange of peal and glare,
Till now, an utter stillness being made,
No stem was stirred within the palsied air,
And dawn against the sky-line, dim to view,
Cinctured the opaque heaven with ghastly blue.

But broadening zenithward, the light began,
As though some desolate polar sea should split
When Arctic summer cleaves its crystal span
Of ice, disparting and dispelling it ;
Even thus the darkness, to its core moon-ploughed,
Broke in great pearly bergs of drifting cloud.

And forthwith as the face of one who grieves

By sudden joy is filled, its tears yet warm,
The lustre of innumerable leaves

Laughed limitless below the wasted storm;
And many plaintive unseen insect things
Filled the wet world with dreamy murmurings.

Then wondrously he started up from swoon,

He started with spread arms, and straightway knew
For true indeed the mild full-rounded moon,

The scintillance of sward indeed for true!
And sure that no death-fancy tricked his sight,
Trembled in deep thanksgiving and delight.

Soon also, glad at heart, was he aware

That all sore malady had slipt from him,
And that he stood on earth, with answered prayer,
Potent in each resuscitated limb,
Still one in whom youth's fire hath ashes turned,
Yet strong to achieve that end for which he yearned.

While thus he paused, about the shining sward

(For so it fell, as if by random chance),
Ere from those pale heights he went palace-ward,
A moment wandered his half-heedless glance,
Beholding, severed by the late storm's power,
The ruined stalk of one wild mountain-flower.

And watchful of how low its leafage drooped,
Compassionate regard illumed his eyes,
And close above the shattered Flower he stooped,
Until his white beard touched it vapor-wise,
And on his hand one large tear, like a gem,
Dropt as he broke the green bud from the stem.

Then rising, with slow tremulous tones he said :

“Be joined our sad fallen fortunes, fate with fate,
Poor bud, that in blast-levelled lowlihead
Sorrowest for sweet hope unconsummate !
Surely with me 't were fitter thou shouldst fare,
Companioning with ruin my despair !

“ We shall go down, we two, toward that dear land
Whence in days distant my desire took wing,
And where like sea-foam to the sea-swept sand
Manifold lovely memories yet cling !
We shall go down, while these calm hills, for us,
Abide indifferent to our exodus !

“ Lo, here, in place of perished youth shall be
The shadow of wrinkled age I am become !
And as I kneel upon allegiant knee
To murmur of my life's long martyrdom,
Thou shalt well cast, poor bud of piteous blight,
Cold irony on that lost Flower's delight !

“ But she, I doubt not, bending where I kneel
Her sweet memorial charm of unchanged eyes,
Through all her soul’s white chastity shall feel
A new slow splendor of divine surprise,
Brimming it wholly, as pure dawn might brim
All a clean lily to the balmy rim !

“ And then, I dare hope, dowered with gentle strength,
Clear through my proud heart shall her vision go,
Until her spirit shall have learned at length
The life-long fealty of my own to know, —
Viewed by one glad look, as mild lightnings view
Some deep cloud-cloister of the midnight blue !

“ And though in that last hour we seem to meet,
Given of the churlish years but slender grace,
As two that stand chasm-sundered while the fleet
Immitigable dark hides face from face ;
Yet in such hour, — nay, even at death’s bleak edge,
To have deemed my stern past vain were sacrilege ! ” . . .

Down o’er the slopes of those dawn-lighted hills,
Having so spoken, he set forth full soon,
By rocky barriers and by rainy rills
And pines keen-pinnacled against the moon,
Or tracts of wood whose fissured foliage made
Pillared serenities of ghostly shade.

And marvellous also was the agile speed
That spurred his steps on their steep downward way,
As though he had gained some grace of godlike heed
That willed all weariness to stand at bay ;
And he had crossed the utmost hill's lone height
Ere yet the suave moon held the central night.

Now onward with unlesseing speed he went
Over the lowlands, till three added hours
In distant fathoms of wan firmament
Had reared before him the black palace-towers,
And reached at last the royal park, and stood
Among the bowers and aisles of its broad wood.

But when he neared the palace-walls, and let
His glance roam as it listed, here and there,
Watching the parapet on parapet
Of terraced lawn drop grandly through vague air,
The bloomful urns, the shrubs in gleaming line,
The carven cornice, the armorial sign,

Or yet the solemn portals of vast size,
The graceful balconies vine-screened from sight,
The flickering fountains that curved petal-wise
From calices of sculptured malachite,
The silvery pools, the slopes of dreamy fall,
The myriad-windowed palace proud o'er all, —

Now when he had viewed these fair shapes one by one,
From time's tyrannic changes all seemed free,
As, after centuries of storm and sun,
The immemorial dictatorial sea ;
Nor could he mark a trace whereby to tell
Of the fierce years that plunder and dispel.

But when he reached the steps where grim in stone
Two lions of mighty bulk were crouched at base,
Sheer from his jaded frame all zeal had flown,
Craving for any rest in any place ;
And forthwith, grown too tired to heed or care,
He sank in slumber on the stately stair. . . .

Then it befell for him that they who keep
Ward o'er the weightless phantasms we name dreams,
Divided the dark tapestries of sleep
On a drear vision of strange glooms and gleams, —
A glimmering cavern, huge and deadly still,
Like the cold hollowed heart of some great hill.

Rough-cloven of living rock the arched walls rose,
In gray quiescence, in sepulchral light ;
And here, while silence took intense repose,
He moved with laggard steps, with doubtful sight,
And on through openings far away descried
New shadowy cavern into cavern glide.

But glancing earthward swiftly, in a trice

He felt his brain reel hard in throes of dread,
Felt horror like a rigid hand of ice

Assault his heart and make his limbs grow lead,
And strove to let one bitter cry cleave air,
But stood with locked lips and affrighted stare.

For all the cavern's amplitude of floor

Was clogged with human forms whose every face
Death's pale indubitable sign upbore,

Haggard and wide-eyed in that spectral place ;
Yet though they seemed long dead, for some strange
cause

Corruption marred them with no hideous flaws.

Then he was made aware, in this wild dream,

That near him, risen from deeper deeps, there stood
Many commingled shapes of mien supreme,

With beauty and awe to tell their brotherhood ;
Shapes as funereal-hued and large as when
Thunder-clouds move in images of men.

But one rose kinglier than his kind, and he

Spake presently, with rich voice pealing clear :
"Believe not thou the throngs that compass thee

Allured but of their own blind rashness here !
Lo, these that sought the sacred Flower and gained
Void shadow, are thus defeated, thus disdained !"

So in his curious dream that spirit spake,
Sweeping one haughty hand above the dead . . .
And now a silence which he dared not break
Followed for many moments, till he said :
“ And on my own life must the same doom fall,
Thus to lie lifeless in this monstrous hall ? ” . . .

Even then, as if for answer, he awoke
Immediately ; and now the morn was high,
And all the towering stair besieged of folk
Who turned to him with many an eager eye ;
And near him stood, both wondering hands outspread,
The King, deemed long ago among the dead ! . . .

But when from prostrate posture he rose up,
He wondered sharply that his hand should hold
A great flower, like a diamond-crusted cup,
Dazzling with blended splendors manifold, —
A thing in truth so radiant that man's sight
Failed where it blazed, ineffable for light !

Lo, even to such magnificence of bloom
Had burst the poor bud gathered by his hand
When pitiful of its vague moonlit gloom,
Ere he went downward from that lofty land ; —
Common and lonely then, but at this hour
Miraculously grown the long-sought Flower !

Nay, nor long sought ! in truth, not sought so long,
By many a fancied year, as he had deemed ;
For now in centre of that marvelling throng
Fair with all youthful majesty he seemed
As when he moved, ere yet the quest was old,
Lordly and lovely over wild and wold.

For thus far had the quest been real ; but all
Which followed by some wayward spell was lent,
Out from the dominance of whose dark thrall
He woke at last in speechless wonderment,
Those latter years of weakness, woe and toil
Cast wholly from him, like a snake's dry coil !

And now, before another hour was fled,
The King had learned the story of his quest,
And he had felt upon obeisant head
The hands of royal benediction rest,
And heard the murmur : " Thou hast nobly won
The title of thy sovereign's chosen son ! " . . .

So the King spake, with faint yet tender tone,
As one that ill can hide besieging tears,
And left him in a great rich room alone,
Those words like echoing music to his ears,
And all his soul like gladdened wine that keeps
A spear of sunlight in its ruby deeps !

But while he mused how fate had willed to send,
After continual sorrow bliss untold,
Softly was parted at the chamber's end
A crimson arras wrought with ferns of gold;
And issuing thence, with cheeks like rosy flame,
With eyes all starry fire, the Princess came.

And outward from no flower's fair covert slips
Any bright-belted bee its charms beguile,
Than brilliant now between flower-balmy lips
Broke the warm wordless welcome of her smile;
And watching her chaste face, for joy agleam,
It was with him as when we dream we dream.

Entranced, elated, thrilled, he faltered then,
While she drew nearer, clad in noiseless white:
"Not often, I think, does death so favor men
A moment ere his hand shall fall and smite.
Thou, beauteous Presence, wrought of shadowy dream,
Art not, for all thou dost so sweetly seem!

"Nay, I remember what the legends told, —
How, dying after years of empty quest,
Those other searchers would in dreams behold
The lost Flower's dazzling secret full-confessed.
But my lot verily hath larger bliss;
My death-dream wears diviner emphasis!" . . .

Then spake the Princess, murmuring: " Ah, be sure
With all strange dreams and spells thy days are done,
Thou life no lustral fire might wash more pure,
Thou valorous and unvanquishable one !
Rather than deem thou dreamest, meet at last
Me, the poor guerdon of thy laboring past !

" Ah, poor indeed ! since how shall these eyes dare
View shameless the calm grandeur of thine own ?
Tried hast thou been by stern ordeal ; but where
Has my great worth at all been proven or shown ?
Yet now, for nothing given, thy love is won, —
A gem outvaluing the vital sun !

" Pardon, if thy full story met my ear
While mute I stood where yonder draperies fall,
Now quivering in thy presence to appear,
Now motionless for deep amazement's thrall,
With rapturous thrills through my astonished heart
To see thee what thou so sublimely art !

" Ah, let my voice cry out, avowing all !
Let me say fearlessly : ' I love, I love ! '
Till memory, made obedient to my call,
Comes phantom-footed at the sound thereof,
And lending thee one soft hand, one to me,
Goes down with us to where her dead years be !

“ Art thou still mindful of the looks that met
So oft yet transiently in other days,
Or of the sweet song thou didst rashly set
Where I should ramble near it and should raise?
Yet couldst not thou, by vague and tender sign,
Judge of my spirit what I judged of thine?

“ Knowing thee not, I knew thee ! Having heard
Never thy voice, familiar seemed its tone !
Untold of how thy heart was ruled or stirred,
Its lightest fear or fancy was mine own !
And powerless of thy love’s depth even to guess,
For surety I believed it fathomless !

“ And when, the palace through, thy wistful face
In places where I passed was found no more,
I thought thee gone aloof to some still place
And desolate, thy dark lot to deplore ;
But of thy grief I did not dare believe,
Strong soul, how grandly thou hadst gone to grieve ! ”

Then, ere the ending word of what she said,
His arms had clasped her in impetuous way,
And two that loved were never lovelier wed
By passionate human meeting than were they,
Whom now at last cold fate could no more part, —
Lips touching lips and heart laid warm to heart !

.

Nor many a day had passed before the King
Gave with high pomp of nuptials his fair child
To him on whom, for great accomplishing
Through soilless worth of life, the people smiled,
And whose weird tale of quest from ear to ear
Had flown with wondering comments far and near.

And when at last the unsparing hand of death
Bowed to his final sleep the monarch's head,
They reigned upon whose blended names no breath
Calumnious or unkind was ever shed;
And always while they reigned the Flower staid bright,
Starring the crown with its keen peerless light!

But when that fateful term the years allot
Befell this other King, mourned wide and well,
His wondrous Flower mysteriously was not,
Vanished to nothing, as the old records tell . . .
Nor has its radiance once been seen since then
Through all new centuries by all mortal men!

BIGOTRY.

EACH morn the tire-maids come to robe their Queen,
Who rises feeble, tottering, faded, gray.
Her dress must be of silver blent with green ;
At the least change her court would shriek dismay.

Each noon the wrinkled nobles, one by one,
Group round her throne and low obeisance give.
Then all, in melancholy unison,
Advise her by antique prerogative.

Reading the realm's laws, while they so advise,
From scripts whose yellowed parchments crack with age,
They bend the misty glimmer of bleared eyes
To trace the text of many a crumbling page.

The poor tired Queen, in token of assent,
At solemn intervals will smile or bow ;
She learned how vain was royal argument,
Back in her maidenhood, long years from now. . . .

Each evening, clad in samite faced with gold,
The Queen upon her tarnished throne must wait,
While through her mouldering doorways, gaunt and old,
Troop haggard-visaged crones, her dames of state.

She hears them while they mumble that or this,
In courtly compliment exact and prim ;
With shrivelled lips her shrivelled hand they kiss ;
They peer in her dim eyes with eyes more dim.

Each night the tire-maids lull her to repose
With warped and rusty lutes whose charms are fled,
Till softly round her withered shape they close
The dingy draperies of her spectral bed.

And so she wears the mockery of her crown
With sad compliance, futile discontent,
And knows her people like herself crushed down
By dreary tyrannies of precedent !

But sometimes, wakening out of nightmare's thrall,
With clammy brow and limbs from terror weak,
Through the dense dark her voice will faintly call
A name the laws have made it death to speak !

The name of one her girlish heart loved well,
A strong grand youth who felt her soul's deep needs,
Who strove to snap her fetters and dispel
The stagnant apathy of senseless creeds. . . .

Again from her steep towers, on that far morn,
She marks him urge his followers to the fight;
She notes with silent pride what fiery scorn
Leaps from his good blade, battling for the right.

She sees him dare his foes that swarm like bees,
Brave, beautiful, a rebel, girt with hates. . . .
And now, in lurid memory, last she sees
His bare skull whitening at her city gates !

SUGGESTIONS.

WHEN darkly o'er the mind have flown
 Bewildering mists of grief,
When doubt's rough arm has overthrown
 All bastions of belief,

When hope is like a flower that falls,
 Despoiled of bloom and balm, —
Even then we gain, at intervals,
 Majestic moods of calm.

Though empty looks the aim to explore,
 By words of mortal breath,
The mystery that is life — and more,
 The mystery that is death,

Yet gleams of happier change are known,
 Brief-clad with cogent power,
When feeling reigns on reason's throne,
 The sovereign of an hour !

And then, if so the heart shall choose,
Our thrilled and wondering sense
Can hear the voice of nature use
Aërial eloquence ! . . .

When lonely memories of our loss,
In dreams to thrill the sight,
Have swept funereally across
The draperies of the night,

Perchance, along the illumined land,
Dawn seems, with sweet release,
A white consolatory hand
That points to bournes of peace ! . . .

Or if, when day is done, we pass
Where deep woods vaguely stir,
Whose branches hide the embowered grass
Of swards they sepulchre,

Perchance a sudden joy will greet
The breast that misery mars,
When clear through sundering leaves we meet
The high smile of the stars ! . . .

Or yet the same rich pulse of thought
 May wake, in souls like these,
To watch the long pale pathways wrought
 By moons on summer seas! . . .

Or yet when fleet cool winds arise,
 At some harsh tempest's flight,
While half of heaven in blackness lies,
 And the other laughs in light! . . .

Thus many a grace through nature lives,
 By whose dear aid we gain
Some delicate sympathy that gives
 Nepenthes unto pain!

O soft appeals! O shadowy spells!
 You seem, when earthward borne,
Like birds from far Hesperian dells
 In alien climes forlorn!

And whence you float, on transient wing,
 Ah, wherefore vainly guess?
Enough that while you bide you bring
 Sublime suggestiveness!

DESPOTISM.

NIGHT in Stamboul is at its drowsy noon ;
Like hollowed crystal beam the faint-starred skies ;
Where cypresses throng black below the moon
The pale domes of the Sultan's palace rise.

No sound this deep repose will break till dawn,
Save when the tremor of some long breeze runs
Among the oleanders on the lawn,
Where swarthy sentries loll beside their guns.

Dead still the town ; close-guarded, here and there,
The massive gates loom high in silver shade ;
Alike o'er mosque and mart, o'er street and square,
One silence of the sepulchre is laid.

Stern is the curse that crushes, bans or dooms
All rebels that may venture, scheme or dare . . .
Some groan their hearts away in dungeon glooms,
In exile or in slavery some despair.

What peace at last this Orient empire lulls,
What safety from alarm its despot cheers,
Guarded by fortresses of human skulls
That tower to-night o'er moats of blood and tears !

And he whose patient hope no peril dims,
Whose desperate zeal no fear of failure mars,
To tear the chains from liberty's white limbs,
Must fight his way through swarms of scimitars !

. . . And yet, even now, where purple pomps unfold,
The Sultan, with all power at dark eclipse,
Dies from the poisoned wine whose cup of gold
His own Sultana lifted to his lips !

A KIND OF PREACHER.

Volumes might be written on the impiety of the pious. — HERBERT SPENCER.

A MIGHTY moral teacher this,
Who deals, with finely flourished arms,
Now in damnation, now in bliss,
Now sweetly comforts, now alarms;
And skilled to clothe each view intense
With pulpit-shaking eloquence!

Nothing too vague or too sublime
Transcends his confident surmise;
The awful ambuscades of time
Conceal no secrets from his eyes;
The deeps of space he coolly sounds;
He gives eternity its bounds!

On nature's plan his looks are bent,
And lo, she teems, we straightway learn,
With special providences meant
For his rare wisdom to discern.
He scorns what science may disclose,
For she but talks of what she knows.

Poor science, holding in her hand
A few scant remnants of earth's youth,
And having at her slight command
Nothing more potent than the truth! . . .
The sword of fact but ill appals
Where bigotry's great bludgeon falls!

He lifts aloft his pious gaze;
In holy wrath his features glow;
For all dark sinning souls he prays;
His congregation weeps below.
He sees destruction's giddy brink
Thronged with these rogues who dare to think!

But once beneath his throne we sat;
We heard his discourse, word for word;
And God was this, and God was that,
And God was thus and thus, we heard;
Till we, who merely mope and plod,
Envied this bosom-friend of God!

THE WORM.

WHERE garden pathways glimmer blithe
And bees go singing, one by one,
I watch your clammy coldness writhe,
In headless hatred of the sun.

Perchance with strange and mute appeal
You question fate's capricious powers,
That harshly doom your frame to feel
This long breeze trembling through the flowers.

Perchance you hold as dreary thrall
This freedom, sweet with summer light,
And pine once more to loll and crawl
In quietudes of earthy night.

Or yet, perchance, you loathe the dews
That flash in brilliance here above,
But thrill to dream of how they ooze
Through mouldy fathoms that you love.

Or where the lilies break from soil,
With taintless chalices of bloom,
Perchance you yearn to see them coil
Damp snaky roots amid the gloom.

Ah, well ! Few men with equal sight
Can read the riddle of life's term,
And that which I may hail as light
Looks darkness to my brother worm.

So, dismal burrower, hidden be
Once more within your realm forlorn ;
Grope dumbly down, and leave to me
The balmy lilies bathed in morn !

IMPERFECTION.

WHENCE comes the old silent charm whose
tender stress

Has many a mother potently beguiled
To leave her rosier children and caress
The white brow of the frail misshapen child?

Ah! whence the mightier charm that age by age
Has lured so many a man, through spells unknown,
To serve for years, in reverent vassalage,
A beauteous bosom and a heart of stone?

CHRIST.

AS one may watch the vapors die
That shroud some greater star from sight,
Until its throbbing orb hangs white
In slumberous vaultages of sky, —
Even thus we watch retire and fly
All shadowing mists of empty creeds
That long have dimmed the immortal light
Of this man's golden words and deeds!

Man lofty and lone, yet Man no less,
Though eager nature at his birth
Had ampler dreams of human worth
To incite and thrill creativeness!
From awful urns beyond our guess
Draining that power none plies but she,
With holier elemental earth
She joined it, and the event was He!

Blameless, unique, he lived and spake,
So wise above his lowlier kind
That all the endowments of his mind
Seemed radiant as from godhood's wake.
He sought to quell the nameless ache
That pierced humanity's heart; he sought
Ease for its pagan thirst to find
At bounteous conduits of chaste thought!

He loved us in the o'erbrooding way
That heaven bends over sea and land;
The meek benignant of his hand
With sweet strange tyrannies could sway;
He bade us break the stubborn clay
Whose bonds detain the ascendant soul
From those pure summits which command
The glory and calm of self-control.

No prize beyond death his promise gave,
No visible paradise of sense;
He only implied that recompense
Which is to right, our side the grave,
As to the shaft the architrave,—
That guerdon of sublime device,
The realization high, intense,
Of individual sacrifice!

His teaching's rich remedial store
Among unlettered listeners fell
Not in cold idiom, as was well,
But soft pictorial metaphor ;
Till they who marked its precious lore
Thus blossom in parable or trope,
Too credulously made it tell
Illusory messages of hope !

What vital truths his counsel said
Were called by supernatural names,
Their grand utilitarian aims
Misvalued, misinterpreted.
His followers traced about his head
The angelic nimbus, meekly worn, —
While they contemptuous of such claims,
Mocked him with fiery heathen scorn !

Fond ignorance, on his acts intent,
Clad them in miracle's weird guise
And linked them to the smart surprise
That dexterous juggleries invent ;
Or yet fierce brains their efforts bent
To assert him kinned with evil fates. . . .
And so he moved before men's eyes,
Half-cheered with loves, half-lashed with hates !

Girt thick by crime, yet free from flaw,
Fearless he moved through field and mart,
Philanthropy's divinest part
Substantiate in his life's pure law,
And showering on the world he saw
Those peerless ethics, wide as air,
Yet narrow as any hearer's heart
For entrance and continuance there.

Then came the hour when scathed with jeers.
He fell before that last loud sin
Whose echoing infamy has been
Vibrant through eighteen hundred years.
He lived pre-eminent above peers,
He died with mercy in his last breath, —
Yet only as gratitude could win
Gethsemane, Calvary and death!

And since the Syrian sun looked down
On that supreme historic woe, —
The desecrated brow below
Its bloody and ignominious crown,
The stark nailed limbs, the ribald town,
The insulting spear, too base to slay, —
How many a creed has caught its glow
From that one dire and lurid day!

What wild polemic heat has raged !
How gibbet, stake and rack would fright
Pale shuddering martyrs, morn and night !
And how, through centuries unassuaged,
Calamitous battle has been waged
By hot ecclesiastic leagues,
Till history's wan muse tires to write
Of massacres, bigotries, intrigues !

And lo ! this fury of sword and pen
Was flung toward him whose love could span
Humanity, and who pleaded man
For peace on earth, good will to men !
The reach of whose intuitive ken,
Strong with desires to save and bless,
Outsoared all philosophic plan
In monumental kindness !

But now at last through lovelier ways
His bright identity may burn
For the unfanatic few that turn
To watch it with impartial gaze.
Stript bare from fable's cheapening praise,
A memory and a name unpriced,
At last with reverence we discern
The white humanitarian Christ !

THE DYING ARCHANGEL.

BYOND the sense or dream we know as
man's,

In heights or deeps where time and space are
one

And either as the mote that specks a ray ;
At fountain-head of mystery, force and rule
Whose funds of calm are causes of all worlds,
Ended, begun or yet to roll and shine, —
A being, a child of light and majesty,
Did evil, sinned a terrible sin, and felt
His immortality tremble, while a Voice
Whose mandate was creation and whose wrath
Extinction, spake the doom he feared must fall.

“So near wert thou to natal roots of good
That almost thou wert I, as I was thou ;
And hence the incomparable deed devised
Of thee, sin's primal enemy, hath sent

A shudder among the voids where systems wheel
And made the soul of order rock with threat.
Great is thy sin, as thou, bright subaltern,
Art great; and therefore great must be thy shame.
Death is that shame; and yet a loftier death
Should take thee, as befits thy place and power.
So shall thy passing into emptiness
Be archangelic for its dignity,
As thou, archangel, shouldst in grandeur die."

Then he that heard with anguish, raised his eyes,
Dark as two seas in storm, yet dared not speak.
And while he stood, with glory and ruin each
Blent in his mien, like some wild shattered cloud
That lightning rends and leaves, once more the Voice:

"Thou knowest of how among my million stars
One beautifully beamed for centuries, yet
Hath aged at last, and nears its fated close.
That star I love as I loved thee; for both
Served me in radiance as my vassals, both
Shone the exemplars of obedience, both
With memories of proud loyalty shall haunt
Eternity through all its domes and zones.
Go, therefore, thou, imperial in thy pain

Of exile and of punishment, to lay
The shadowed splendor of thy limbs and brows
Dying upon that dying star! A world
Of melancholy as mighty as thine own
Shall compass thee, and while it fades and dims,
Thy spirit in unison shall wane. Farewell!"

Then sought the Archangel, plaintless and alone,
This ancient star whose orb should be his tomb.
Once its wide continents had swarmed with man,
But now the torpid life of toad or worm
Reigned sole among nude fields and spectral woods.
No beast was left, no hint of leaf on bough,
No delicate wraith of flower, no glimpse of vine,
Or yet, through many a year, no trill of bird;
But all was dreariness and desuetude,
Fatigue, affliction, languor and decay!
The star had been a planet, allegiant
To a vast sun that glimmered at this hour
Wan as a wasted ember from its heaven.
In bends of rivers that had shrunk to streams,
On coasts of seas that flashed a glassy gray,
Phantoms of cities reared their roofs and towers,
With streets that swept by mouldering palaces,
With monstrous parks, where crumbling statues loomed,

With temples, mausoleums and monuments
In pathos of debasement; with long wharves
Where sick, monotonous ripples ever lapped
On towering hulls of rotted ships that once
Had scorned the ire of tempests, — nay, with all
To attest a race of such magnificence,
Dominion, empire and supremacy
As knowledge wed to wisdom nobly breeds.

Then, drooping low, the accursed Archangel spake :
“ O star, I knew thee in thy luminous prime,
And loved thee not alone that thou wert fair,
But for the attainments and the victories
Wrought of thy peoples till they rose like gods !
For slowly did they climb, while æons passed,
From brutish aims to deeds of golden worth.
I watched and loved their leaders of high thought,
Their stealthy change of laws from vile to pure,
Their conquests over tyrannies and wrongs,
Their agonies, hopes, rebellions, and at last
The white dawn of their peace ! But most of all
I loved, O star, the poets upon thy sphere,
And found in these melodious prophecy
Of dreams thy future waited to fulfil. . . .
But now thy future and thy past are one,

And I, who am fallen from immortality,
Shall rob thy dissolution, to my joy,
Of death's worst pang, being come to lay myself
In thee as in a sepulchre sublime ! ”

So, while the dimness gathered gloom, and night
That had no morning shrouded these lone lands,
The Archangel bowed his head and screened his face,
And died in silence with the dying star !

TWO WORLDS.

A FIERY young world, in far voids of sky,
Called to an old world growing dark and chill :
“ Now that you near the hour when you must die,
Tell me what mighty memories haunt you still ! ”

Then from the old sad world this answer fell :

“ Vast peoples rose and vanished where I swing. . . .
But all my poor tired soul remembers well
Are the great songs my poets used to sing ! ”

WAR.

HOW long until the old sombre curse relent
That shadows with its lurid pest our world, —
That often amid dismay and pain has hurled
The fairest isle, the mightiest continent?
How soon shall all this power and reign of wrong
Back to a prisoning past be sternly sent,
Where ancient evils lie like serpents curled,
Writhing with memories that they once were strong!

Through ages glory about thy feet hath clung,
War, terribler than all known shapes but they
That deep in noisome charnels crumble away;
Yet proudly o'er thine hideous frame are flung
To-day the purple and gold of kingly dress,
And round thee throng allegiant old and young,
With banner and plume and pomp their love to pay,
And kiss thy slaughterous hand's red ghastliness!

Thy smoking altars are the riot of strife;
The great are of thy vassalage; alone
Is he best loved that shall approach thy throne
Dripping most vilely with his brother's life;
To restless monarchs' ears thy flatteries dread
Thou bringest, pointing with ensanguined knife
Toward fame, —a spire of insubstantial stone,
That looms o'er glimmering meadows dark with dead!

The fumes of flaming city or village rise
With welcome to thy nostrils, and the reek
Of gore is delicate as no words may speak;
Thine ears drink greedily those tragic cries
Of suppliant women seized in maddened flight;
Vain prayers of the old for mercy dost thou prize,
Or agony of the mother's thrilling shriek
When her sweet babe is murdered in her sight!

And thou hast dared with ocean's loudest boom
To match thy savage clamor, and to appall
Its violence, when thy cannon's deadly ball
Rakes o'er blood-slippery decks a path of doom;
Or when the lit wreck flares in hot distress;
Or when the dim vast vessel, in midnight gloom,
Suddenly at the sly torpedo's call
Thunders and blazes into nothingness!

Or yet with exultation dost thou go,
When truce its lull to battle and rapine brings,
Where the sad hospital forlornly rings
With cries and moans of suffering, keen or low,
And all the vacuous rant delirium saith;
Or where at the ended fight's dumb overthrow
Of man and steed, fly forth on massive wings
The dolorous-throated poursuivants of death!

Wisdom, thou lamp of nations, light supreme,
With chaster brilliance glitter than of yore!
Win men to seek thy beauty and to adore
Knowledge, whose rich oil feeds thy virgin beam,
Till life to loftier longings be attuned,
And from humanity, in both deed and dream,
This folly of hate be exiled evermore,
Now haunting it as foul flies haunt a wound!

O quench eternally these baleful fires!
Wipe clean and sheathe henceforth from future ills
This truculent sword that arrogantly spills
Fresh blood to hiss amid insatiate pyres!
For lo! all thought where high ambitions dwell,
All pure ideals of freedom, all desires
Whose rush of godlier warmth man's bosom fills,
Revolt from this black janizary of hell!

THE STARS.

BUSIED with earthly doings here below,
How careless of the grand stars do we grow!

How many a night while these most richly burn,
Toward all their flowers of fire we never turn! . . .

I dreamed of some strange world that cloaks of cloud
Ensheathed each evening in one dreary shroud.

Across the heaven at sunset it was drawn,
And wrought sepulchral darkness till the dawn.

But once, through each new century of that sphere,
The dense obscurity would disappear

And show the stars, for multitudes to mark,
Clustered and wreathed along the dizzy dark!

And then all tribes and nations, as they saw,
Would sink upon their knees in speechless awe!

POVERTY.

THEY that have borne such miseries yet endure;
They that so often have cried are crying still;
We learn to name them lightly, these, our poor,
As part of earth's irreparable ill.
Us their sad voices have slight power to thrill,
Their desolate haggard eyes but faintly grieve,
Since we, who meet their anguish face to face,
Through many a year its rigid truth receive
As poverty's eternal commonplace!

All men, we muse, in shadow of trouble grope,
Yet these are girt unchangeably from birth
With dubious gloom whereby the star of hope
Shines vaguely on harsh crag or sinuous firth;
Yet who may alter this unvarying dearth?
Philosophy's astral splendors cannot light
Cold want's disheartening dimness of eclipse,
And science, although she weigh vast worlds in night,
Brings no new morsel of bread to famished lips!

Famed thinkers, noble alike of brain and deed,
Have grown white-haired in pondering how to give
These millions, bruised by poignant thorns of need,
Some potent and benign alleviative.
But still their burdening hardships grimly live ;
Still in the resonant city's careless heart,
While deep groans pass on the wind like empty
breath,
Cadaverous throngs, mankind's far greater part,
With rags for armor fight the assaults of death !

At toil they are stabbed with cold or scathed with heat ;
Tear-soaked, blood-stained, is the scant food they win ;
From earliest youth round their unheeded feet
Bloom tanglingly the red-flowered weeds of sin.
Whatever bodily pain has worn them thin,
Whatever sorrow has racked them, still they hear
Starvation's rancorous wolves behind them press,
While vice and ignorance, each with ghostly leer,
Exult in mockery at their wretchedness.

Child after child, they are born to shame and woe,
And stained at birth by even a mother's kiss, —
Too briefly pure, like those fair flakes of snow
That fall amid the impure metropolis !
What savage ineludible curse is this,

O sovereignty that rulest fate and time?
Why are these countless lives thus blindly
wrecked,
And made to dreary suffering or mad crime
So terribly and so strangely pre-elect?

Age after age rolls onward; progress wheels
Her golden chariot over shattered wrong;
Louder the limpid voice of liberty peals,
Gladdening our world with archangelic song;
Yet multitudes below the virulent thong
Of this harsh doom go staggering to their graves
With feet that falter and with shapes that writhe.
O freedom, poverty has her droves of slaves;
Thou holdest but humanity's mean tithe!

They suffer and die; they starve, burn, freeze and faint!
We hug our treasures, and the old ill endures . . .
How long, O infinite God, ere this wild plaint
Shall pierce the trance in which our spirit immures
Its best nobility, and the "mine" and "yours"
Clash with hate's fierce antithesis no more?
How long ere love on a loveless world shall flow?
How long, how long, ere we few, safe on shore,
Fling spars to drowning myriads there below?

Have mercy, O men ! O ye that strength possess,
Bridge firm, with pity and charity for span,
The void of egotism, of selfishness,
Whose gulf so sternly sunders man from man !
Help with grand aid the unconsummated plan
Of centuries moving to millennial goals !
O seek that loftier grace, that richer good,
That prouder patriotism, where earthly souls
Meet mightily in sacred brotherhood !

FIAT JUSTITIA.

I.

THEY tell her he is dead ; and when she hears
Right instantly she fears
Lest they shall wonder that she sheds no tears.

“ Poor widowed one,” they whisper, for they see
Her sorrowing mien ; but she
Makes passionate inward murmur : “ I am free ! ”

II.

She hears that he is dead ; and when she hears,
Leap the hot heavy tears
To eyes that have not wept for years and years.

And lo, she has forgiven him all the shame
He wrought upon her name,
So blackening it with soilure of black blame.

Then to his home she hurries, yearning sore
To look on him once more ; . . .
But friends in awful virtue guard the door.

GREEK VINTAGE SONG.

I.

I WATCH the balmy moon of Crete
Shine softly o'er the slumbering wheat;
I hear beyond the dusky firs
The silver flutes of vintagers;
I see the marble goddess gleam
Below the cypress, near the stream;
I wait, I yearn, I sigh for thee,
While vaguely calls the distant sea,
Pasiphaë, Pasiphaë!

II.

Aloof, in yonder breezy lawns,
Like some gay troop of graceful fawns,
With grape-leaves round their brows and throats,
The revelling shepherds urge their goats;
Or, with white robe and shining zone,
Gay Daphnis flies from Philemon . . .
Ah, come! I wait, I yearn for thee,
While faintly booms the mellow sea,
Pasiphaë, Pasiphaë!

NAPOLEON'S HEART.

*"Imperial Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away."*

NAPOLEON in Saint Helena lay dead ;
And when the corpse had borne the embalmer's art,
A certain English doctor, it is said,
Placed in a silver basin by his bed
The Emperor's heart.

At either side this precious thing he set
An exorcising taper, slim and still ;
And though he lay with eyes averted, yet
His curious charge he could but ill forget,
And slumbered ill.

Now, after ugly dreams that shocked him sore,
He woke at last to hear, when night was late,
A scrambling noise that loudened more and more,
A splash — and the dull falling to the floor
Of a dead weight.

He leapt from bed and saw with wild surprise
The vessel void, and overturned at that;
And saw as well, (could he believe his eyes?)
Dragging the heart along, in greedy wise,
A monstrous rat!

The grim thief, once discovered, fled dismayed . . .
And yet that heart whose vast dreams could control
Europe, and at whose pleasure thrones were swayed,
Just missed the ironic fate of being laid
In a rat's hole!

ADAGIO.

WHEN memory is a harp in sorrow's hand,
How plaintive the æolian music swells,
As though a breeze from some enchanted land
Went sighing across long slopes of asphodels !

What pale wild spirits troop with ghostly tread,
When memory is a harp in sorrow's hand,
Funereal-vestured and rue-chapleted,
Gathering at her disconsolate command !

What wistful eyes amid that phantom band
Meet ours through portals of the unclosing years,
When memory is a harp in sorrow's hand,
To throb with melodies that are made from tears !

What spells of summons, while the deep strains roll,
Wake from its rest, with resurrection grand,
That shadowy Campo Santo called the soul,
When memory is a harp in sorrow's hand !

HABIT.

SHE marks the sure tides fall and flow,
The white sails come, the white sails go.

Part of the shore she seems to be,
Like its old wreck, its one lean tree.

Perchance she seeks it, wandering so,
As white sails come, as white sails go.

But sometimes, while the sun drops down,
She takes a scrap of seaweed brown,

And looking at the far-off ships,
Holds *that* against her withered lips ! . . .

THE WISE PAGE.

THE brave lord, Baldwin de Poinceville,
In his castle-court doth stand,
Helmeted, spurred and armed in steel,
Ere he rides to the Holy Land.

His full grave brow hath a weary mark
And his lips are drawn with pain,
As he stays his stately steed and dark
By a touch on its jewelled rein.

And he whispers now, with a solemn care
Lest his deep voice break for tears,
To the gentle page with the yellow hair,
So wise beyond his years.

And he charges: "Be thou leal to serve
Thy lady, the chaste and good;
Let not thy stanch young spirit swerve
From seemliest vassalhood.

“ Nor lightlier serve, for thy sweet part,
Because thou long hast known
I cannot win her pure young heart
To trust and love mine own.

“ And bitter though the thought must be
That she stands not here this day,
To pledge a parting cup with me
And to speed me on my way,

“ Still, guard her with proud zeal and glad,
With homage that reveres,
As thou art loyal-souled, my lad,
And wise beyond thy years! ” . . .

So charges Baldwin de Poinceville,
And he sighs one sombre sigh.
But therewithal doth his young page kneel
And with trembling tones reply :

“ Heed me in this I do aver,
Since I joy to swear it here :
With my zeal and homage both, sweet sir,
Shall I guard thy lady dear! ” . . .

Away rides Baldwin de Poinceville,
Stout knight, to the Holy War;
And the page to his lady's bower doth steal,
And knocks at his lady's door.

“Open,” he cries, “O my lady fair,
And having no more sad fears,
Come, kiss your page with the yellow hair, —
So wise beyond his years!”

THE MISANTHROPE.

HIS lonely dwelling long has stood
Deep in the calm heart of a wood.

'T is said that blighted love has curled
His lip in hate toward all the world.

O'er gloomy books he loves to brood,
Exultant in his solitude.

Stately of stature, pale of face,
With downward look he loathes his race.

But night and morning past his door
An engine speeds with savage roar.

He shudders when he hears it come,
Rushing across the stillness dumb !

He does not hate its noisy clash,
Nor yet by night its crimson flash.

He only hates the bitter thought
Of human hearts thus near him brought;

Glad hearts, perchance upon their way
To others passionate as they;

Live hearts that seem to mock his own,
Once throbbing warm, now dead as stone!

BIRTH.

“**B**LOOD will tell,” says my lord,
Watching his fair brave boy,
Light of his life and joy,
Straight as a reed and tall,
So trusted and so adored.
— And I, how I laugh at it all !

“ Blood will tell,” says my lord,
With pompous pity and fine
For that bad wild son of mine,
To me, the old trusted nurse ;
“ With a father that died abhorred,
The son has turned out a curse.”

“ Blood will tell,” has he said ?
O my soul ! if he only knew
Of the deed I dared to do
These twenty good years ago,
I think he would strike me dead,
He would hate the sight of me so !

“Blood will tell,” would he say,
If he dreamed who bore that boy,
Light of his life and joy, —
Changed on the birth-night? . . . Well,
I can keep dumb, any way. . . .
Oh, certainly, “blood will tell!”

HE AND SHE.

IT was sin, sin, sin,
Gross and shameless, I admit,
And I grant you full scope in
Your anathemas of it.
I was no fool, and saw
My folly ere I fell,
A woman reared too well
Not to know the rigid law.

It is just that I should pay
The bitter forfeit now —
See the shocked world turn away
With cold eyes and knit brow.
I should treat them, in their place,
Quite as harshly for such sin;
They should get no grain of grace
From the wife that I have been.

Even this, too, I could bear :

That he, my mate in wrong,
Meets no arraigning stare

From the same capricious throng. . . .

But that he gains, forsooth,

A dash of caste and tone—

When I think upon that truth,

I clinch my teeth and groan !

HYPOCRITES.

I AND my neighbor met to-day
Outside our gates, on the common way.

My neighbor babbled in pleasant wise,
With smiling lips and with smiling eyes.

I for answer was all as gay,
Meeting her there on the common way.

But she, behind her smile, I know,
Felt the curse of a wasting woe,

Since now not many days gone by,
Her harlot daughter came home to die. . . .

Yet we were masked with an equal skill;
For seeming happy, I had no will

To strip the gown from my breast and show
The mark of my husband's drunken blow!

WITH INTENT TO KILL.

(SPOKEN IN A PRISON-CELL.)

.

AND so in just this laggard way
The proof desired became, I say,
Slowly a surety, day by day
More hateful.

I ruled my nerves with flinchless power ;
I made my spirit crouch and cower,
Abiding till the final hour
And fateful.

One night she thought me long miles thence :
But near the porch, with every sense
Alert in anguish of suspense,
I waited.

And then at last I saw them take
Such farewells, each of each, as make
The tremulous lips that give them ache
Unsated.

He glided off; I did not stir:
She stole within; I followed her:
My hot brain, all a dizzy blur,
 Grew hotter.
Beside the harp she paused and sat;
I crept behind her like a cat;
I saw her smile once. After that —
 I shot her.

HALLUCINATION.

(A MOOD OF MADNESS.)

HE thinks I cannot see this hate
That dogs me like a sleepless fate.

He calls himself my friend ; a smile
Hides the cold blackness of his guile.

He fancies that I read him not,
This second-hand Iscariot !

In each new ill my sharpened sense
Can trace his fierce malevolence !

He does not dream that I possess
This keen unique perceptiveness ;

That though we may be miles apart
I feel the hate within his heart ;

That when my room is still and dark,
For hours I lie awake and hark

To his vile thoughts, that hate me so,
Writhing like adders to and fro. . . .

But those grim threats I heard last night
Have filled me with a deep affright.

I did not guess he would have dared
Ah, well; 't is wise to be prepared !

A man at least should guard his life
(So now I bear this secret knife !)

AT MIDNIGHT.

THERE is something at the window,
Tapping on the pane.

I heard it twice; I heard it thrice;

I hear it now again —

Above the whirling tempest and the rushes of the rain.

Why should I chill and tremble

At little sounds like these,

And sweat for fright in my bed at night

And feel my pulses freeze, —

I that have battled bravely with perils upon seas?

.

We were together on the raft . . .

I moaned to Heaven for food;

The merciless gale brought not a sail

To the sea's great solitude.

“Courage,” he whispered . . . and at last mad famine
fired my blood!

God ! how he shuddered when he saw
The murder in my face,
And raved for life beneath the knife,
And begged an hour of grace,
And caught me with his wasted arms in agonized
embrace !

.

Why should I chill and tremble
At little sounds like these,
And sweat with fright in my bed at night
And feel my pulses freeze?
Back, dim ghost at the window, to thy grave in the
tossing seas !

TWO WOMEN.

I.

SHE drags her steps, with slothful air,
From leaden sleep prolonged till late;
With careless robe, loose-knotted hair,
She lolls for hours inanimate;
And through the slow day's lagging flight
She coarsely gapes and yearns for night.

But when the awaited darkness falls,
Faint pleasure warms her withered heart,
And to her faded cheek she calls
The rosy lie of cunning art, —
Till now, beneath its furtive power,
She beams forth like a baleful flower!

And when the night is further spent,
She trails in pride her gorgeous dress,
A shape of beauty strangely blent
With some elusive hideousness; . . .
And now at last you see her well,
The bacchanal foster-child of hell!

II.

In vigils held near wasting pain,
In mercy's noblest deeds of gold,
She makes her life one sacred chain
Of sweet benignities untold,
And turns toward lofty goals of good
Her sacrificial womanhood !

Through haunts of hunger, woe and want,
With patient fervor, year by year,
She bears, divinely ministrant,
Her calm self-immolating cheer,
More welcome, where her footsteps pass,
Than silver rain to thirsting grass !

In her deep look such stars endure,
Such holy splendor lights her face,
You know her soul so whitely pure,
That sometimes, where she moves in grace,
The rustling of her garment brings
Delicious dreams of fluttered wings !

AMOR INFELIX.

WITH blinding tears through sleepless nights
Against her doom the spirit fights,
Only at dawn once more to meet
The dull old anguish of defeat.

Though life to outward eyes may seem
An easy robe of silken gleam,
Yet ah! chafed limb and bosom know
The hempen shirt that stings below!

For human hearts will sometimes keep
Their worst of wounds a secret deep,
And nothing lives beneath the day
That breaks in such a noiseless way!

Wild passion cries, in savage pain :
"Though I move heaven, I will attain!"
But fact, that sways with iron rule,
Inexorably murmurs: "Fool!"

To-day slow reason haunts the ear
With measured words of languid cheer ;
To-morrow love's tyrannic need
Has snapped her logic like a reed !

"Why," moans the voice of our distress,
"Must love stretch hands toward nothingness?
Can the great full-brimmed river be
That moves toward no receptive sea?"

Oh, fate, what pang so keen as lies
In the chill gaze of worshipped eyes,
When calmly meeting love intense
With vacuums of indifference?

What cruelty has ever borne
Such dark profundities of scorn
As that which unto love can say
One irremediable nay?

A cruelty that though it sigh
With pity's tenderest reply,
Is like some hand that drives the blade
Still deeper in the wound it made !

TOLERANCE.

HE is not great whose work or word,
By fiery indignation stirred,
Would judge all evil hearts that live
With no relenting palliative.

Nor he that by too neat a skill
Would axiomate the human will,
And bid our fettered minds declare
Responsibility a snare.

Nor he that seems for those who list
An icy intellectualist,
Cramping morality's wide span
In bounds utilitarian.

Nor he that mercy's form would dress
With tinselled robes of mawkishness,
And give to crimes of worst intent
His facile tears for nutriment.

Nor he (nay, he the least of all!)
Who speaks of sin's eternal thrall,
And deems that by some dark decree
Man is what man shall ever be! . . .

But he is great who looks on shame
And dares to name it by its name,
Yet feels his breast burn warm for those
Hard-struggling in temptation's throes!

Who rates at full and dreary worth
The bitter despotisms of birth,
Where tyrant ignorance controls
Her loyal tens of thousand souls!

Who sees how vice her venom wreaks
On the frail babe before it speaks,
And how heredity enslaves
With ghostly hands that reach from graves!

Who well has pored on life and thence
Deduced sublime experience;
Who pities error since he must,
Though still his pity leaves him just!

Whom random ire, whom sudden ruth,
Can turn not from the vital truth,
Nor once retard nor once advance
His calm and regal tolerance . . .

Ah! such as he should walk afar
With Plato in some purer star,
And mark the grand Greek muse and dream
In some new deathless Academe!

AMBITION.

A NIGHT-WIND moved and moaned by fits,
Wandering the field of Austerlitz.

At peace above its mounds of slain,
Heaven wove with stars her shining skein.

Beside his tent, austere as stone,
Napoleon stood and mused alone.

His eyes (an eagle's in their light)
Roamed the vast vistas of the night.

That hour was born within his breast
The Titan's anguish of unrest.

He felt his spirit tower, aspire,
With insolence of new desire.

All victories he had won o'er men
Seemed slight and immaterial then.

He craved in many another land
Conquest a millionfold more grand ;

He thrilled with all the strange distress
Of superhuman selfishness ;

And while his vision rose and sought
Those throngs of stars, he thought this thought :

“ In every orb of these I mark
That pierce with fire the dome of dark,

“ In every world that beams afar,
In each distinguishable star,

“ I long to reach, as at this hour,
My glory and plenitude of power ! —

“ To live through time till time be done,
Imperially Napoleon ! ”

PARIS, 1884.

ON THE RIGI.

HOW beauty in tones of alien terror speaks
While thus enthralled by wonderment we stand,—
While Nature throngs on us these pale wild peaks,
Cloud-sundering, of her Bernese Oberland!

Nay, half with angry rock she seems to plan,
And half with polar snow she seems to blanch,
The lairs of haughty gods whose heed for man
Lives but in glacier and in avalanche!

And yet how sweet to think that southward lies,
Past this bleak mood of scorn, could we but see,
With bounteous olive-trees and tender skies,
The sunny penitence of her Italy!

SWITZERLAND, 1884.

THE LION OF LUCERNE.

I.

WHEN those brave Swiss in fine obedience fell,
 Heroically heedful of their trust,
Art pondered by what new great means to tell
 Her reverence for their consecrated dust,
Until at last, bewildered and dismayed,
To mightier Nature she appealed for aid !

II.

Then these two blended powers, together grown
 One glorious mourner, eloquent though stern,
Created from the mountain's living stone
 This grand memorial Lion of Lucerne,
Where Art and Nature, towering side by side,
For once are monumentally allied !

SISTER BRENDA.

(A luxurious room, fire-lit in the early evening dusk. Two women sit together, one young and beautiful. The latter speaks.)

YES, friend, I should be happy,
For life has used me kindly;
Its easy and wealthful favors
Are mine in plenteous measure.
And more is mine, — a husband
Unfaltering in his fondness.
Yet you divine some secret
Whose meaning still eludes you;
And though, when I have told it,
You bitterly despise me,
At least you shall have pitied
The anguish it has cost me!

That portrait is my sister's . . .
The firelight's red caprices
Reveal what ample amber
Waves in the silken tresses,

And show by fitful glimpses
How creamy are throat and bosom.
I had not half her beauty,
Though livelier wit endowed me
And speech of daintier phrasing.
Her virginal composure,
Chaste as embodied moonlight,
Made Brenda like a goddess.
Her spirit felt no tempests,
To assail the large and dreaming
Tranquillity of its waters;
Yet here lay depth, translucence,
And heaven's reflected candors !
Above my worldlier nature
She rose, ideally perfect.
I, fallible, frail, human,
Was clay beside her marble !

We two had lived since childhood
There in the wide old stillness
Of one New England homestead,
With pastoral thrift about us,
And calms of dimpling country,
Where half the world's big echoes
Came lost in drowsy rumor.
Our mother, scarce remembered,

Had died when we were children.
Our father, cold and loveless,
Had ever ruled us harshly,
And driven our only brother,
Impetuous high-strung Edmund,
Forth from his home in anger.

An artist came, one summer,
To linger among our meadows
And paint our dawns and sunsets,
Our foliage-broken hillsides,
Our glens and groves and hazes,
Our loops of loitering river
That beamed by farm and orchard.
He was not then the famous
Paul Morion that you know him,
But to myself and Brenda
No boon of earthly laurel
Could make his genius nobler.

And now, as weeks went onward,
I saw that Brenda loved him.
She could not hide her passion
From me who clearer read it,
Since I had given with fervor
My heart where hers went also !

But he (as men will sometimes
Not search their own souls wisely)
Wavered for days, I doubt not,
Between myself and Brenda.
Far holier was the feeling
Her purity had wakened;
I saw this truth and faced it
With torments of conviction!

At last it fell, one morning,
That Paul and I, together,
Had strolled where one low hill-top
O'erbrowed a long green level.
Beneath us towered an elm-tree,
Folding the sward in shadow
With arches like a cloister's;
And girt with shadow, at converse,
Were Brenda and my brother.

I saw Paul Morion watch them
And flush with consternation
As he who stood by Brenda
Now kissed her like a lover.
Paul knew that our one brother
Dwelt somewhere at a distance,
But knew not of the moments

When stolen and joyous meetings
Had given to poor fond Edmund,
As now below the elm-tree,
His favorite treasured sister.

To me, an instant after,
Paul turned with eager questions . . .
And suddenly, as I heard him,
A dark temptation seized me.
I saw the sin's full horror,
And yet my soul reeled near it
In giddy and headlong ruin.

So, to my shame eternal,
The lie leapt forth and cursed me.
And he who heard believed it,
And from that hour I held him
In ever-deepening bondage,
While through my feverish rapture
Remorse coiled like a serpent!

The tranquil eyes of Brenda
Pierced me with cruel poignance;
I longed to fly the unconscious
Arraignment of their glances.
From Paul, the unknown young painter,

My father, straightway doubting,
Had shrunk with disapproval.
Our marriage, if I urged it,
Would summon, I was certain,
His cold immediate veto. . . .
And so by stealth, one evening,
I fled from home, was wedded,
And on through weeks that followed,
Lived with my toiling husband
Here in the far-off city.

No tidings from the homestead,
No word from Brenda reached us,
Till suddenly Edmund sought me
And told me she was dying!
I knew what blow had stricken
The lily of her sweet girlhood,
And flew, in guilty terror,
To find her white and speechless.

That night I watched beside her . . .
A faint light clad the chamber
In gray phantasmal dimness.
Outside, the winds of Autumn
Were sweeping chill and plaintive.
Her eyes that long had shown me

No ray of recognition,
At last were softly altered ;
She looked on me and murmured
My name, and while it sounded,
I sank in self-abasement,
Low-cowering at the bedside !

That night, while Brenda waited
On life's last awful boundary,
I told her my wrongdoing.
With fiery tears I told it,
With stormy sobs that racked me, —
Moaning, when I had ended,
For one least word of pardon.

Then, from the gathering shadow
That death had wrought about her,
She spoke, and to my vision
A saintly unearthly splendor
Made all her face like morning.
To me, who knelt beside her
In misery of contrition,
Quite calmly she responded,
" Sister, I will forgive you ! " . . .
And the Autumn dawn, soon after,
Turning the chamber ghostly,

Came in and looked on Brenda,
Pale as itself, and lifeless.

She pardoned — yes, divinely !
But what of my own spirit?
What of the wrathful conscience
That mercilessly presses
Its thorn-crown on these temples?
Below the costly garments
Paul Morion's wealth has bought me,
A shirt of serge frets always,
With unrelaxing penance !

Now, friend, you know my story . . .
And you — can *you* forgive me?
Ah, well, I shall not blame you,
However cold your answer.
We cannot all, we mortals,
Be great, like sister Brenda !

The portrait? That was painted
From memory, two years later . . .
Oh, yes, my husband made it . . .
Some call it his great picture.

MOTHS ROUND A LAMP.

THE red sun fell two sultry hours before ;
No dew has made the lawn's vague spaces damp ;
In through my open windows more and more
The giddy moths come reeling round the lamp.

Alert fantastic shapes of differing kind,
They sweep and swerve in many a fitful speck,
And rouse the old easy commonplace to mind
Of wayward mortals whelmed in piteous wreck.

From bournes of nature's pastoral silence brought,
Below the night's pure orbs, the wind's faint breath,
What wilful spell, I question of my thought,
Entices them to this mad glaring death?

By what perverse doom are they led to meet
This fiery ruin, when so calm and cool
The deep grass drowns at the elms' dim feet,
The moist leaves droop above the starlit pool? . . .

But while in dreamy watch I linger long,
To duskier coloring my mood recedes,
Till now the tranquil chamber seems to throng
With dark wild imageries of man's misdeeds.

And then, like some full rustle of sudden wings,
A long breeze floats disconsolately past
And steals from unseen foliage that it swings,
A murmur of lamentation, till at last,

While the sad pulses of each gradual tone
A sadder meaning from my revery win,
All earth's rebellious agony seems to moan
The curse, the mystery of all human sin !

CONCEALMENT.

WHEN I behold some mighty listening throng,
I marvel, while their faces gleam toward mine,
At the large hope, despair, faith, sorrow and wrong
That slumbers in their midst and makes no sign.

So, when I watch night's thick-starred gulfs profound,
I wonder at all the calmness they reveal,
Though in their glooms, with radiance, rush and sound,
A million million worlds forever wheel !

IRONY.

I SET my gaze upon two stars that seemed
 Twin orbs of equal flame in heaven's dark height,
 So close with interblended rays they beamed
 From the deep dome of night.

"Oh, happy stars," I thought, "like this to bide
 Through mighty changes, lovingly withstood,
 Companioned each of each, whate'er betide,
 In silver sisterhood!"

Then sounded to my sense, from night's great thrall:
 "On either star, this hour, there dwells a race
 That knows not if the other lives at all,
 So vast their sundering space!"

THE YOUNG SAMSON.

I N Zorah dwells no youth like him,
So fleet of step, so firm of limb.

His long gold hair is bright as dawn;
His throat is like a stag's for brawn.

He lets the winds blow east and west
On the brown thews of his bared breast.

With artless fancies, boyish hopes,
He roams the cool Judæan slopes.

At doors of tents, when he has passed
Where swarthy idlers moved or massed,

The murmured words his ears have won
That praised him as Manoah's son.

A babe whose birth, ere yet it fell,
The Lord of Israel did foretell,

By sending down, in mighty grace,
The angel with the star-like face !

Grim soldiers, that across their wine
Growl curses at the Philistine,

Will soften, if he come by chance,
The eyes where lurk the wolfish glance,

And mutter low, with smile or nod :
“ ’T is he — the Nazarite to God ! ” . . .

But day by day the careless child
Will wander far, will wander wild.

He does not dream what webs of doom
Are weaving on the future’s loom !

He only feels that life is fair
As heaven’s unsullied arch of air ;

He only knows the peace intense
That broods o’er boundless innocence ! . . .

Yet sometimes he will shrink and cower
With wonder at his own strange power.

For once a vast loose rock had rolled
Where grazed a shepherd’s frightened fold,

And he with one hand caught it up,
And tossed it like an acorn's cup!

And once, half tired, against an oak
He leaned, when lo! its huge frame broke!

And gayly, once, a stone he threw
That pierced the clouds, and died from view!

NIGHT.

SHE roams, with form half shrouded
In mists of dusky hair,
The glittering or dull-clouded
Immensities of air ;
And in her mien is present,
Majestic and quiescent,
The spell of some incessant
Mysterious despair !

Beneath her and above her,
While forth her dim feet go,
Flock the fair stars that love her,
With labyrinthine glow ;
Now in still splendor burning,
Now shaken as if through yearning,
Perpetually discerning
Her immemorial woe !

With plaintive sighs and hollow,
 With moans that die or swell,
The winds her wanderings follow
 And know her secret well.
In varying voices yearly
They mourn her doom austere-ly,
Yet its deep anguish clearly
 Their wild lips will not tell.

Grim owls that hoot and mutter,
 Weird bats that wheel and sweep,
Stray moths on wings that flutter
 Where damp flowers droop in sleep, —
To these come vague divinings
Of all her mute repinings,
And why with silver shinings
 Her dewfalls dumbly weep!

The sea, now softly sobbing,
 Now a mad life that raves,
Lamenting, billowing, throbbing
 Through countless coves and caves,
One song of pity urges
Through all the change-ful surges
That bound its myriad verges
 With multitudinous waves.

But she, supremely mournful,
Pursues with tireless pace
One flying afar and scornful
Of her funereal grace :
Day, that through heaven's expanses
Eternally advances,
Hiding from her dark glances
The effulgence of his face !

GOLD.

NO spirit of air am I, but one whose birth
Was deep in mouldy darkness of mid-earth.

Yet where my yellow raiments choose to shine,
What power is more magnificent than mine?

In hall or hut, in highway or in street,
Obedient millions grovel at my feet.

The loftiest pride to me its tribute brings;
I gain the lowly vassalage of kings!

How many a time have I made honor yield
To me its mighty and immaculate shield!

How often has virtue, at my potent name,
Robed her chaste majesty in scarlet shame!

How often has burning love, within some breast,
Frozen to treachery at my cold behest!

Yet ceaselessly my triumph has been blent
With pangs of overmastering discontent.

For always there are certain souls that hear
My stealthy whispers with indifferent ear.

Pure souls that deem my smile's most bland excess,
For all its lavish radiance, valueless !

Rare souls, from my imperious guidance free,
Who know me for the slave that I should be !

Grand souls, that from my counsels would dissent,
Though each were tempted with a continent !

AFTER DEATH.

NOW that her clasping love has loosed its hold
And dropt from thy life's majesty and strength,
A little thou rememberest, at length,
To mourn her — thou, so passionless of old !

Just as the oak, loud winds being calm, no more
Hears under his large deeps of rain-wet leaves
The delicate vine-stems fluttering, and grieves
For that which he has heeded not before,

So thou, day's clashing discords mute, dost mark
Her absence, and art mindful of it then,
When evening purples the vague west and when
The golden fire-fly reels through summer dark.

STILL WATER.

HE wrote and wrote, but could not make a name;
Then cursed his fate and called the world to
blame; —

The world, that knew not genius when it came!

“The world,” he cried, “that crowns us in a night,
For nothing; but that damns us, wrong or right,
Rather from sheer indifference than for spite.”

One of his friends would slyly smile to hear;
“Ah! second-hand Byronics!” one would sneer;
One said “Give over;” one said “Persevere!”

One said but little, though she thought and thought,
Through the long weeks and all the work they brought,
While the wife toiled and while the mother taught.

There went a story that he might have wed
An heiress, this poor scribbler for his bread,
But took a little meek-eyed girl instead, —

A little meek-eyed girl without a cent,
Who scarcely knew what half his writings meant,
Loved him reveringly, and was content.

And now her spirit mused upon a way
To brighten his dull face again. One day
Her slender hand along his shoulder lay.

“Write this” . . . And then she told him what to write
In just a few fleet words, and stole from sight,
With smiling lips but with a look of fright.

He laughed, at first; yet in a little space
The languid laughter died from out his face
And left mute meditation in its place. . . .

If I mistake not, it was this same year
That suddenly men knew him, far and near,
As having won the world’s capricious ear.

And she? Why, if she had not seen so plain
How soon the laurels cured his longing pain,
She might have held them even in mild disdain.

But now she blesses fortune’s kind decree, —
Proud, glad, through him! — though still, for all we see,
The same small meek-eyed wife she used to be.

THE WASP'S NEST.

DARK-NICHED amid' the vine-clad wall,
Bulges its rough drab-colored ball,
And in and out forever flit
Black wiry shapes that people it.

Though dim to see, though frail and slight,
It teems with venom and with spite;
A bad grim thing to dwell so near
The fragrant garden's balmy cheer!

Ah, why, amid the vast domain
Of nature's variable reign,
Inevitably do we meet
The bitter mingled with the sweet?

Why do her loveliest moods relate
To stern antagonisms of hate?
Why from her beauties do we guess
Antipodes of hideousness?

These wasps that hide their baleful bands
Here in our temperate northern lands, —
Perchance, as now, where softly glows
The velvet of some wine-red rose —

Are kindred in strange fatal way
To the dread cobra, coldly gray,
That through fierce heats of torrid hours,
Crawls deadly under Javan flowers !

THE HEARTS OF TREES.

I LIE at ease amid the glade
Where late my random steps have strayed;
The branches tenderly are swayed;
Vicissitudes of shine and shade
The plenteous grasses feel.
Yet here in this idyllic place,
Gloomed from the crystal blue of space,
No longer does my vision trace
What outward symmetry and grace
The foliage may reveal.

For dearer still the boon I prize
To roam with penetrative eyes
Recesses of the trees that rise
Above me, in luxuriant guise
Of twinkling green arrayed;
To mark the gladsome birds explore
Each growth to its cool central core,
And note their quick shapes dart and soar

Through many a leafy corridor,
Dim gallery, deep arcade.

O feathered favorites, blithe and fleet,
Whom the calm woodlands love to greet
With hospitality more sweet
Than man, howe'er he may entreat,
Can make their boughs dispense,
To you the allegiant trees have told,
In fond confession, shy or bold,
In cloisteral music richly rolled,
Rare special secrets they withhold
From man's intelligence!

Ah! human life too often sees
Great realms of thought or dream, like these
Great shadowy hearts of yonder trees,
Fluting fantasias on the breeze
More eloquent than words!
But we, whose earth-bound spirits tire,
Watch with regret's long-smouldering fire
Those interdicted bournes aspire,
While fate forbids that our desire
Shall wear wings, like the birds!

DISSONANCES.

FIRST VOICE.

HOW sad that when a few years vanish, I
Shall surely die !

All that the unfinished world may grandly be,
I must not see.

Rich harmonies from discord streaming clear,
I shall not hear.

Equality's last fine triumphant throe
I shall not know.

Stupendous deeds by science shall be wrought
When I am naught !

The last expiring hate's last bitter hiss
My soul shall miss.

Love's golden universality august
Shall find me dust.

Oh, anguish, that when these few years are fled
I shall be dead !

SECOND VOICE.

How sad that death, when I so long to die,
Should pass me by !

Life on my heart like a great fetter weighs,
Whose links are days.

Equality? Shout it to the starving mobs
Monopoly robs !

The glory of science? Do we praise, indeed,
Cripples for speed ?

When all believe she has perished, crafty hate
Will hibernate.

Love's final reign? Salute her, loyal sons,
With needle-guns ! . . .

I too have thrilled while shadowing mists were drawn
From deeps of dawn !

I too have talked with stars, entranced, inspired . . .
To-night I am tired ! . . .

ETERNITY.

(A CERTAIN MOOD OF A CERTAIN MIND.)

It seems to me not only possible but probable that in a higher and above all a happier condition of human life, not annihilation but immortality will be the burdensome idea ; and that human nature, though pleased with the present and by no means willing to quit it, would find comfort and not sadness in the thought that it is not chained through eternity to a conscious existence which it cannot be assured that it will always wish to preserve.—
JOHN STUART MILL.

WHAT pleasure will not one day pall?
 What sweetness will not one day cloy?
 A joy that has no end at all
 Is not a joy.

On that fair Heaven which some men name
 With such glad surety while they bless,
 Must there not fall the curse, the shame
 Of weariness?

This hour, in calms of dazzling sky,
 Perchance the applausive song rings pure ;
 But after æons have gone by
 Will it endure?

That Heaven the dying thrill to name
And die desiring from their souls,
That rapture ceaselessly the same,
That goal of goals,

When centuries of its ease are past,
Who of its white crowned throngs august
Shall deem not its delights at last
Ashes and dust?

Will not the voices faintlier come
And faintlier from the angelic band,
And harp by harp drop sadly from
Hand after hand?

Will any wide chaste wing be found
To cleave at last the untainted air?
Will any sound be save the sound
Of sighings there?

What then shall Heaven's bright halls behold
But hate of peace no discord harms,
And languorous heads that droop their gold
On languorous arms?

Will immortality not moan
At last for some austere distress
To break its monstrous monotone
Of happiness?

And in those realms of endless dawn
May life at last not grow to be
One sombre and eternal yawn
Of vast ennui?

SPACE.

NO mortal thought's divinest flight
Has pierced the mystery of my might.

Incalculably I transgress
The boundaries of all consciousness.

I watch in calm no tremor mars,
Creation storm me with her stars.

Armies of shining worlds in vain
With tireless courage dare my reign.

Defiance and enmity they fling
The phantom challenges I bring.

Still obdurate, they seek to whelm
My hollow indomitable realm.

They feel not, by gross pride upborne,
My cold profundities of scorn.

They see not that like one grand gem,
While reachlessly aloof from them,

I wear, with sovereign soul at rest,
The Universe upon my breast !

D E F E A T.

BY bitter pilgrimage he sought to win
Those far dim towers that he would roam within.

Through paths of peril, loud with dying groans,
Down chasms of failure, white with human bones,

Past brakes of treachery whence the tiger sprung,
O'er swamps of envy where the scorpion stung,

His eager feet pressed onward to attain
The luring bourne of that desired domain. . . .

And there at last, worn fugitive of fate,
He clutched the mighty clarion at the gate.

A moment more, and while its proud peal rose,
The towers would rock, the portals would unclose.

But then, even then, by some foredoom profound,
He dropped dead ere his lips had waked one sound!

THE FUTURE.

(A FRAGMENT.)

PERCHANCE in that mysterious land
A race unutterably grand
Beholds all earthly evils planned,
All crimes, all woes unmerited. . . .
Perchance through ages big with doom,
In calm, in patience and in gloom,
Waits the white godlike race by whom
Our world shall be inherited !

THE DEATH-BED.

ON some far crag a beacon veers ;
The wintry ocean clangs and heaves ;
The naked boughs are strung with tears,
And brittle hang the icy spears
Along the caves.

Down on the garden's ghostly snow
The glimmer of a night-lamp falls,
And shadows past the curtains go,
And they within the chamber know
The Voice that calls.

They bend to watch the dying eyes,
They hear the lonely billows boom, . . .
And out across the o'er-arching skies
A noiseless golden meteor flies
From gloom to gloom !

MASTER AND SLAVE.

ON his rotting old throne sat Death, in a cave where
the black dews fell.

Near by stood his beautiful awful slave, the angel Azraël.

“Have you served me true,” said Death, “in your work
of tears, to-day?”

And Azraël answered, “Live the King! I hearken and
I obey.

“A bride on her bridal morn; a lover that dreamed of
bliss;

A child, last left in a widow’s home,—these stiffened
beneath my kiss.

“These and the numberless more: yea, Master, my work
of tears

To-day has sped as in other days, for years, for years
and for years.”

Death smiled with his dark sad mouth, with his hard
grave passionless eye.

“ And what of the souls that sought your kiss? Did you
pass these proudly by?

“ When the mourners moaned your name with their
longing lips and wan,
When a wild hand signalled you to pause, did you then
pass proudly on? ”

And the angel Azraël said, in lowly and loyal way :

“ Even so, dark Master. Live the King ! I hearken and
I obey.”

HELIOTROPE.

WHEN wooed by sunny winds and skies
You deign for these but soft replies;
Yet rapture stirs your life when woo
The spells of darkness and of dew.

And all your fears take noiseless flight
Before the dusky kiss of night,
And all your love, in deep content,
Is given with dear abandonment !

And then down shadowed garden-ways
Your keen luxurious perfume strays,
As though a ghost should roam unseen,
That once was some voluptuous queen !

DEO VOLENTE.

WHILE beams of the last vague ember with the
dimness blend,

Sitting here, I intensely remember my dear dead friend.

I recall from what deep affection has blossomed my
pain,

And I weight it with recollection, like a flower with rain.

Then the solemn thought comes o'er me, to my soul so
dear,

Of a passionate oath he swore me, when the end was
near.

He swore, and in all faith meant he to keep the vow,
As he murmured : "*Deo volente* — three nights from
now !

" If death have an earthly portal leading back to light,
I shall tread with a foot immortal your floor that night.

“And let this trust, I beseech you, in your heart avail,
That supremely I strive to reach you, even though I
fail.

“And the greater the task, the greater my love’s
unrest!” . . .

So speaking, a moment later he died on my breast!

.

While the light of the last faint ember is dreamily shed,
Sitting here, I intensely remember the words he said.

Then I make all my soul an altar where my hope may
fare

And kneel at its foot to falter one yearning prayer.

Whatever the bonds that bind thee, mayst thou strain to
rend

Their strength until freedom find thee at my side, O
friend!

Come with thine old glad bearing untouched of the
tomb!

Better this than an angel wearing crown, harp or plume!

Yet if love has no power to lure thee past the dread
black bound,

Give proof that *thou art*, I adjure thee, by a sign, a sound!

.

I crouch near the cold spent ember ; I am stirless, dumb ;
A chill has crept to the chamber, for the dawn is come.

Through the night I have sat with senses alert, on fire,
While I waited in all suspense's most acute desire.

But as dawn gives welcome dimly from her realm
remote,

I can hear fact's axe fall grimly upon hope's white throat.

Not a sign or not a sound sent he, and the night is fled !
Ah, God ! that "*Deo volente*" . . . it was wisely said !

TEMPTATION.

ONCE, in the bleak gray bournes where ghosts abide,
Nine spectral figures met, each gaunt and vast,
With blood-red lips, with faces hollow-eyed,
With voices like a shivering autumn blast!

Then later, to a poet whose cheek had grown
Pale with the pain balked love so darkly wins,
They glided, saying in stealthy undertone:

"Make us thy Muses . . . We are nine black Sins!"

REMONSTRANCE.

NAY, poet, idly will you claim
To scorn the hurts your wrongers give.
It is your merit, not your shame,
That you are nobly sensitive !

The burrowing slug, that prowls and delves,
Can fret the imperial oak's repose,
And clammy worms can wrap themselves
In virgin velvets of the rose.

And so while stabs may futile be
To win your least subservient moan,
Hide not your wounds, but let them see
Your blood is redder than their own !

Ah, me, thrice happier is your fate
To feel the lash of slander fall,
Though tipped with acrimonious hate
And steeped for days in envy's gall,

Than once to watch, while seasons roll,
This fire of song grow less intense
That on the altar of your soul
Burns now in luminous eminence !

TRANSFORMATION.

ONCE in an English woodland, where awoke
Breezes that made the dark leaves pulse and shine,
I walked at twilight, willing to invoke
All moods of revery, mirthful or malign,
When gradually on my vision broke
A mighty and moss-hung tree that lay supine,
Levelled by some dead tempest's cruel stroke,
And clasped by coils of ivy serpentine. . . .
If truth now tricked herself in fancy's cloak,
If some brief elfin madness now was mine,
Or yet if actual voices faintly spoke,
Wandering the dusk, there stays no certain sign;
But "I was Merlin," said the bearded oak,
And "I was Vivien," said the snaky vine.

MAIDENHAIR.

WHEN deep in some dim glade we pause,
Perchance we mark how winds caress
These lowly sprays of quivering gauze,
Aerial in their slenderness.

The ruffled leaves of vapory green
Fringe mimic branches, fine as thread,
Above slim stems whose ebon sheen
Is always mellowing into red.

Near trees or bushes hardier-born,
They group as fragile, where you pass,
As though in shreds a mist of morn
Yet lingered on the balmy grass!

Ah, shadowy ferns, in such frail ways
Your lightsome flexuous throngs are wrought,
I half am tempted, while I gaze,
To question of my wondering thought

If silvery whispers of the breeze
Have found, as through the woods they went,
In your phantasmal delicacies
Ethereal embodiment!

LILACS.

IN some plain homestead's chamber trim
At best your beauty shows,
Where earthen pitchers, coarse of brim,
Your billowy blooms disclose.

For here, in altering moods of May,
You seem, through toilful hours,
To stoop from lovelier state and play
The sweet plebeians of flowers !

SOME CITY DAYS.

DEAR are the days, though far apart,
When summer's genial sorceries flow
Sweet on the city's turbid heart
From where kine feed and daisies blow.

When breezes loved by brooks and glades
Float peaceful over greed's raw strife,
And give the untuneful clash of trades
Melodious hints of ampler life.

Such days with soft compassion seem
The infrequent captive trees to greet,
That dewless from dull pavements gleam,
In torrid square or sultry street.

They rouse to delicate surprise
Those rare scant shrubs the courtyard sees,
And bid some faded flower surmise
A murmur as though of phantom bees.

But other messages they send,
While gladdening thus the town's turmoil,
To piteous lives that yearly bend
Below the tyranny of toil.

Sad women, gaunt with need's worst throes,
Will feel the buoyant air's cool thrill,
And flutter like the sickly rose
That pines upon the window-sill.

Rude grimy men that drudge for bread
With spade and trowel, axe and hod,
Will pause in transient dreams to tread
The old leafy lanes their boyhood trod.

Pale ragged children, reared in woe,
Will faintly view, by instinct's law,
That narrow heaven, the best they know,
Dome a green earth they never saw.

And yet with each fresh breeze that rolls
Through lairs that vice and frailty seek,
To still more melancholy souls
Those dear unusual days may speak.

Ah ! would that nature's holier sway

At such kind hours new strength could win,
And full upon their impious way

Curb the wild reeling feet of sin !

A DEAD BUTTERFLY.

IMMORTAL were you named when earth was
young,

Yet here, with wings where florid fire still stays,
On the cold strand of death I find you flung,
Blent with its desultory waifs and strays !

Ah ! blithe and lovely Bedouin of the air,
Once to such revelling life so richly wed,
Well might I dream, while gazing on you there,
That immortality itself lay dead !

THE SORCERESS.

ESMEH, the favorite wife of Shah-Zarar,
Ruled her great lord, at Ispahan, by love.
The gardens of her palace, jasper-walled,
Hung towering with their bloomful terraces
O'er lands whose proud sweep, while she gazed on them,
Made her thrice queen. No rival shared her home,
Where lengths of gallery, each like some new dawn
For brilliance, linked their luxuries of pomp.
Her eunuchs blazed with gems; her dancing-girls,
Daughters of Egypt, swarthy as its wastes,
Daughters of Greece, white as its temples are,
Daughters of Syria, lissome as its palms,
Daughters of India, mystic as its gods,
Daughters of Nubia, black and eyed with fire,
All chosen as flowers of grace among their kind,
Flattered by measures wove with fantasy
The languors of her couch at noon or eve.
That poet allowed sweet chief in all the realm,
Whom Saadi and Hafiz would have crowned to-day,
Whose verse dense marts would swarm from booths to list,

Sang for her sole delight his lays of power.
Georgian had been her birth, of royal kin ;
Her beauty, a marvel ere the child grew maid,
Was borne on breeze of rumor to the King ;
Who, when he heard the story of it, grew wroth,
And saying, " I weary of these rosy lies
That greed of place coins thick to tempt my note, —
By Allah, I laugh at this one," clad the theme
In fear that struck his boldest courtier mute.

Still, months being flown, his Vizier dared, one day,
To set the girl among a timorous group
Of new-bought slaves ; and when the veils were drawn
From various faces and Esmeh's looked forth,
Winsome, unparalleled for virgin bloom,
The King, half doubtful if 't were ghost or flesh
He gazed on, cried with awe, " What maid is this ? "
Then, learning her true lineage, from his robe
He loosed a diamond of great price, and sunk
Its glory amid her dusk of hair, and bade
The ceremonial of their spousals haste,
And clear through seven fond years, from then till now,
Clave to his new choice with unfaltering love.

Broad were the lands by Shah-Zarar's dead sires
Bequeathed him, justly governed, knit with ties

Of fealty, and on every still frontier,
From Smyrna to the Indus, freed of war.
Such peace had fallen his people that the king,
Joyed at their thrift and bounty, might have paid
In gloomier hours but momentary heed
To tidings that now vexed his mood with spleen.
For now a certain sorceress, witch or sprite,
Named Dara, but whose actual race none knew,
Had wrought, in near or distant towns, 't was told,
Black spells on caliph, pasha, prince, emir,
By tricks of dance, till some went mad for love
And others died of it as from a plague.
Yet none could snare the beauteous woman-curse,
Who boldly pushed her presence where she willed,
Melting, if seized, in fumes of lurid smoke
That stung her captors' hands to leave them void.
In each new city it was her whim to choose,
Promptly this Dara would claim courtesy
Of him who reigned there. Such demand refused,
She passed in scorn beyond the gates once more,
Crying out, "I am but woman, yet your chief
Has fear lest Dara should unveil her face
And dance before him! Valiant is your chief,
By Allah and all the prophets! May he meet
His foes with equal nerve, should need arise!
Nor let him brand me sorceress, for such plea

Will help him ill; I am leagued with no dark imps;
I am woman, only woman, though my shield
From violence be a gift of magic source.
Who fears me fears himself; who meets me fair
And falls, hath fallen alone by his own lack
Of temperance, wisdom, bravery, chastity,
And all that should in men mean manlihood . . .
Go tell your chief how Dara scorns him! Go!"

Herewith her form, close-vestured in its veil,
Would speed from sight, and what she had hurled in scoff,
With all the subtlety of challenge there,
Re-told to grandees who had flouted her,
Bred ire and shame, till heads of other towns,
Eager to prove their strength against her lures,
Flung back the doors of palaces to greet
Her coming; but the witchery of her dance
Would follow, and death or madness be its price.

Girt by the surety of his peerless love,
Such tales in Shah-Zarar could wake alone
Contempt for those whom Dara's blights had harmed.
And when at last he learned that she had fared
In calm audacity to Ispahan,
Soliciting his own imperial heed,
"Throw wide the gates," he ordered. "Bid her seek

Our audience-hall to-morrow. Lodge her well,
And charge her that she use, to trap our sense,
Her most voluptuous deviltries of dance.
We mean to test her necromancies all,
And tax their baleful cunning till it wane.
We never yet fell thrall to woman born,
Save one, the loveliest, purest now on earth.
Let this deft jade who boasts that she can play
On what is beast in man till man turn beast,
Feel her own boast grow ashes on her lips! . . .
To-morrow at noon we wait her. We have said."

Ere yet the slaves had lit the scented lamps
Between the porphyry columns looming dark
Where dim pavilions died in flowery courts,
That evening, while the west was one sad rose
Pierced with one lambent star, the enamoured King
Sat with Esmeh and told her of his plan;
And she, remembering all the vaunted spells
Of Dara, this famed sorceress, wound both arms,
White bonds of passion, round her lord, and prayed
Retraction of his perilous resolve.
While so she prayed, the rich night of her eyes
Burned on his own and beamed through tears unshed
Entreaty and pathos. "O my lord and love,"
She pleaded, "who that lives will ever hold

Thy greatness at a loftier worth than I?
Yet even a king like Shah-Zarar is man,
And she, this temptress, may in frailty store
Bane fit for demons, like some thread of snake
That scarce will stir the ferns wherefrom it slides,
Yet fells the unheeding lion! O my liege,
Seek thou not proof that heights of good are thine
Beyond her deeps of ill, for this all know;
But shouldst thou match thy strength with hers, 't will be
The valor of virtue hurling honest blows
At slippery guile that fights by craft alone!"

Listening, the King looked pity allied with love,
And answered: "O Esmeh, my dew-bathed rose,
Truly thou wouldst not make me jeer for slaves!
I have sworn to front this pest until it shrink
In swoon of impotence from what its fangs
Would maim and slay. My sanctity of oath
Must bide inviolate, though your suppliance
Were wistfuller than yonder twilight star
That drops reluctant from the damask west.
Ask all my turquoise-quarries; bid me drape
Your doors with rarer broideries from Cashmere,
Carpet your bath-brinks with new tiger-skins
Fresh from Mazanderân, fetch choicer furs
To glad you from chill slopes of Astrakhân,

From Turkestân bring gaudier tapestries,
Hang in your ears more pearls from hot Ceylon,
But seek not to assuage in me the zeal
For this my task of high example, shown
Through reign of spirit above debasing clay.
For if I fail toward whom all eyes are turned
As light of guidance, wherefore should I hope
Those multitudes of lives that hail me head
Would find not in my ignominy excuse
For thrice ten thousand sins more gross than mine? . . .
But O my heaven of womanhood made earth,
My sweet idolatry, my Esmeh, rest sure
That Allah, who in thee forestalls my bliss
Of Paradise hereafter, will not soil
A love as holy as ours with stain so foul —
Nor let my soul, for even a transient hour,
Swerve from its deathless constancy to thine ! ”

So the king spoke ; and Esmeh bowed her head,
Weeping . . . But on the morrow Dara danced
In the great hall where Shah-Zarar sat throned.

Meek was her mien as quite unveiled she came
In presence of the mighty Persian king.
Her garb, of some diaphanous fabric, clung
Mistlike about her stature, telling all

Its willowy delicacy ; her gold hair
Showed in bright leash how plenteous were its coils,
Wrapping her small drooped head ; both arms were
nude,

But laces lay thick-plied on loins and breast.
No jewel or trace of ornament she wore,
And while toward Shah-Zarar she slowly moved,
“ A hundred fairer faces pine unkissed,”
He thought, “ in that seraglio whose long floors
For seven sweet years my foot hath never paced ! ”

Then Dara, pausing midway of the hall,
Flung from her supple throat a film of scarf
That seemed to melt in vapor, and now at once,
With no least hint of prelude, softly danced.

Gentle of movement, while she thus began,
But full of pliant rhythm and somnolence,
Her body in ordered action bowed and swayed.
Harmonious was the sequence of her steps,
Each gesture fraught with dexterous elegance,
Each posture clothed in dignity and ease.

“ Apt,” thought the king, with all a critic’s phlegm ;
“ Yet many a girl in Ispahan may match

Thus far the scope of her accomplishment.
A sure precision in her equipoise
Offends like vanity ; were it faultier,
With some appeal in it for leniency,
Less coldly perfect and deliberate,
Less wrought by codes of schools, its power were
more." . . .

But Dara had not ended yet her dance, —
Nay, scarce had she begun its wizardries.
And soon her motions, quickening, lost all look
Of study or plan, but seemed alone to breathe
A spirit of candid impulse, fervid truth.
Music, as though of breezes rustling leaves,
Or tinkle of waters through a mossy gorge,
Or ripple of dreamy seas on elfin sands,
Woke round her, following where she leapt or
crouched,
Exulted or desponded, fired or mused.
Her hair, as if unbound by viewless hands,
Dilated, fluttering like a golden flame .
And suiting each new bend of her white arms.
The gauzes at her bosom, drifting back,
Had bared its curves of snow, unseen till now.
Her eyes had grown a splendor, mild yet keen ;
New lineaments and meanings filled her face,

And tremulous at the verges of her lips,
Faded or flashed her rich mesmeric smile.

Forward, with flushing cheek, leaned Shah-Zarar.
The spell had fallen upon him ere he knew.

No wreath of haze, from bastions of great hills
Blown to fantastic shape by summer wind,
Drifts with an airier buoyancy than now
The form of Dara seemed to glide and swim.
Her dance, through some untold resource of art
Miraculous, or sorcery still more strange,
Had grown the incarnate history of love,
Its joys, regrets, hopes, yearnings, fears, despairs . . .
In turn all lived, throbbed, shuddered where she
 swept,
Here ardent and there languorous, here alert
With blissful torture, there forlorn with doubt.
The agony, the expectancy, the pang
Of disappointment, the brief meagre cheer
Of consolation, — every phase of love
Spoke in her sinuous change and counterchange . . .
Then victory wed with ecstasy at last
Rose rapturous after suffering . . . Now her glance
Was blithe delirium, her ethereal arms
Intoxication, her swift-panting mouth

Enticement, her unfathomable smile
The drowsy mystery of all love's delight!

"Allah protect me!" murmured the great King . . .
He rose, to fly the hall, then backward sank . . .
Too late he rose; the spell had mastered him.

Wild-eyed he gazed on Dara where she danced;
He stretched both arms out while she nearer drew;
His breath came hard; all thought of realm or name
Had perished from his mind or conscience; floods
Of weird fleet mist were hurrying through the hall,
And in their flexuous volumes he descried
Nothing save Dara, beautiful past thought —
An houri, a devil, he was careless which —
Radiant amid these folds of rushing cloud.

Nearer she drew, the enchantress, nearer yet,
Still weaving the wild wonders of her dance . . .
"Great King," she whispered, "grant thy slave a boon."

"What boon?" cried Shah-Zarar, with riot heat.
"Ask all thou wilt. The boon, ere asked, is thine!"

Then Dara laughed a low melodious laugh,
And whispered, "Thou wilt grant it not, I know!"

Staggering, the King had risen: "Whate'er it be,
'T is thine. By Mahomet I swear 't is thine!"

Then Dara laughed once more; her eyes were homes
Of luminous promise, and her lifted face
Beamed ravishment from symmetries unguessed
Till now . . . "*I ask the head of thine Esmeh!*"

Between her words, thus given, and what next fell,
It seemed to Shah-Zarar one moment's flash . . .
Later, vague memories thrilled him that he spoke
With harsh command, while hearing as in dream
Warnings from minions born but to obey,
And that in wrath he towered insistently
Till seized by fright men fled to work his hest,
However terrible, and that Dara danced
More near his throne's foot, and he stooped to her,
Infatuate, pleading she would share his power,
And rule, his Dara, queen as he was king.

Then suddenly the wan mists fled and made
The audience-hall as ever it had been,
Save that a eunuch cowered before his throne,
Bearing a head whose neck yet dripped with blood, —
Esmeh's!

And now, crying out with grief,
The wild King burst the trammels of his trance ;
And as he wakened, echoing his mad wail,
The sorceress vanished with a shriek of hate,
To leave him glaring at her ghastly work.

.

Many the silent centuries ago
Since fell this deed of shadowy tragedy ;
But night-winds breathe it yet o'er glades and dells
Of Persian hills ; and moonlit streams that pour
From Demavênd's high snows yet murmur it ;
And Caspian billows mourn it as they break ;
Or southward, where Persepolis rears pale
Her marble memories of dead state, the stars
Robe in their melancholy of eloquence,
Whose voice is light, the anguish of the tale.

"THE TWILIGHT OF THE POETS."

TO E. C. S., ON READING HIS "POETS OF AMERICA."

POET, though twilight, as your clear gaze marks,
Wrap now all sweet Parnassian slopes and vales,
Poor poesy still may hide some frugal sparks
Whose fire of hope not wholly fades and fails;
For if the light alone may bring the larks,
No less does darkness love the nightingales!

SONNETS.

LONGFELLOW IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

ERELONG I paced those cloisteral aisles, erelong
I moved where pale memorial shapes convene,
Where poet, warrior, statesman, king or queen
In one great elegy of sculpture throng,
When suddenly, with heart-beats glad and strong,
I saw the face of that lost friend serene
Who robed Hiawatha and Evangeline
In such benign simplicity of song!

Then, swift as light haze on a morning lea,
All history, legend, England, backward drawn,
Vanished like vision to incorporate air;
And in one sweet colonial home o'ersea
I saw the lamp shine out across the lawn,
I heard the old clock ticking on the stair!

LONDON.

OTHER WORLDS.

I SOMETIMES muse, when my adventurous gaze
Has roamed the starry arches of the night,
That were I dowered with strong angelic sight,
All would look changed in those pale heavenly ways.
What wheeling worlds my vision would amaze !
What chasms of gloom would thrill me and affright !
What rhythmic equipoise would rouse delight !
What moons would beam on me, what suns would blaze !

Then through my awed soul sweeps the larger thought
Of how creation's edict may have set
Vast human multitudes on those far spheres
With towering passions to which mine mean naught,
With majesties of happiness, or yet
With agonies of un conjectured tears !

A DEAD FRIEND.

THIS dead man, soon to seek oblivious earth,
Was loyally my friend, and loved me well.
For him no shadow of blame that could repel
His reverence, in my honored life had birth.
Like some famed knight, admired for brawn and girth
By the young warrior eager to excel,
Ideal in his fond heart I seemed to dwell,
The exemplar and high paragon of worth !

Now sternly, while I linger where he lies,
A burdening shame upon my bosom weighs . . .
Perchance he watches me in calm surprise,
Far from the turmoil of terrestrial days, —
Perchance he looks my soul through, with the gaze
Of supernatural and clairvoyant eyes !

MUSIC.

THROUGH earlier days, when like a fruit in reach,
Hope lingered bloomy and sweet before my sight,
Dear was each mood that Music may invite,
The allegro and the penseroso, each !
But now, when sorrowing passion finds no speech,
All drearier cadence borrows in its flight
The voice of my own agony, and can smite
My spirit as plaintive waves a lonely beach !

Or like pale mourners carrying sprays of rue,
With tremulous bosoms and low eyes that grieve,
With dark voluminous robes and loosened hair,
These pensive melodies go wandering through
The unbroken twilight of my heart, to leave
A kiss on the icy brow of its despair !

TWO PHASES.

I SAW the immense moon rise beyond a sweep
Of shadowy sea whose waves were softly curled ;
I watched the reddening splendor she unfurled
By dreamy and rich gradations landward creep.
Dark pines that fluttering breezes roused from sleep,
Long meadows where the illumined dew lay pearled,
The expectant air, the vast encircling world,
All thrilled with eagerness divinely deep !

Days afterward I roamed that same fair shore ;
Bright surges broke on rocks with mellow roar ;
Both earth and ocean laughed with golden noon.
But faintly, in opal distances of sky,
Like a bowed shape that crawls away to die
Where none shall heed, I saw the old withered moon !

SILENCE.

ALL search of yours but ineffectual seems
To gain some coign of refuge, year by year;
Since far in loneliest woods, in wastes austere,
Winds call, beasts wander, or yet the vulture screams.
With hated sounds of life all nature teems,
And even among the deeps of sleep you hear
Voices now clad in distance or now clear,
That float forever from the lips of dreams!

But weary of spirit, and affrighted too,
At last you hurry away, with footsteps fleet,
To find, in chaos, torpor and eclipse,
Death, your one lover inalienably true,
Encircled by whose ghastly arms you meet
The awful icy passion of his lips!

WINDSOR AND ETON.

I WATCH the might of your historic stone,
As one that stands regretful and apart,
Windsor, whose glory of mediæval art
For old dead tyrannies can ill atone!
Even as I bide here, alien and alone,
From bastion, court and stairway seems to start
(Wrung in past years from many a bleeding heart!)
The ghost of many a bleak rebellious groan!

But when I have crossed your Thames that winds so clear,
What charm of change my spirit overwhelms
To find sweet classic Eton's calm domain! . . .
Nay, not in proud towers opposite, but here,
In gray quadrangles, by scholastic elms,
O England, your true kings first learned to reign!

ETON, ENGLAND.

IN A HOSPITAL.

I CANNOT move among these mournful halls
Where many a white-lipped sufferer has lain,
Where life is one stern monotone of pain,
Jarred only by death's ghastlier intervals,
But some new gradual sense my soul enthralls
And bids me hold the ironical disdain
Born of the pessimist for wildly vain,
Like a rash curse that recks not how it falls.

For though the old baffling question fronts me here
Of why such piteous woes at all should be, —
Of why fate's bitter laws thus bruise and ban,
Ah, still one realization, fair and clear,
Towers up in monumental sanctity —
The ennobling sympathy of man for man !

ANGER.

ON each man born has nature's will conferred
A genie, lofty of stature, huge of limb,
Who ever bides, in unknown regions dim,
The utterance of our one relenting word.
Perchance for months, even years, he has not stirred
To break his bonds of durance, firm and grim,
Until at length, to freedom calling him,
The mandate of release is clearly heard!

Then forth he springs, unfettered, fiercely brave,
Or yet, being spurred by ruder madness, prone
To attest his might in some wild way and fleet;
And there have been hot hours when this dread slave,
While hurrying back to his dark lair, has thrown
Murder's red outrage at his master's feet!

RUIN.

LOOK, friend, where that large trembling maple
weaves

The indulgent sunshine through her careless boughs;
Look where the verge of that soft hill o'erbrows
Bent reapers busy among the tawny sheaves;
Where nature, as you see, no shadow leaves
Of dearth or pain, but with full thrift endows
The exultant soil — and yet my soul avows
This glade a ruin whose very zephyr grieves!

For history's darkest annals never knew
More piteous wreck than to one early love
A wild hour brought, near yonder peaceful slope; —
Yet domed by heaven's calm sanctity of blue,
How idly blows the unheeding grass above
The viewless Herculaneum of that hope!

TREES IN THE CITY.

WHEN I behold how beauteously they rear
From out the engirding pavements, dull and
plain,

Boughs that for genial meadow or fragrant lane
Have longed, perchance, through many a lonely year,
My sympathy wakes dubious yet sincere,
Conjecturing the incalculable pain
Of lives that yearn toward bournes whence they retain
The balm of no remedial souvenir !

But when the spirit of spring breaks cold eclipse,
I dream that every wind which fleetly slips
Through the broad city, is bearing in soft wise,
From happier branches under far free skies,
Compassionate tidings on æolian lips
Of sweet affinities, tender kinsmanships !

VINES.

OFTEN while strolling where the lights and shades
Of restless leaves clothe many a massive bough,
With reverence I can feel my heart avow
Nature's calm strength among her dells and glades ;
I mark how fine a majesty pervades
The span, the stature of each growth, and how
Manhood's most virile dignities endow
Their stalwart clusters, their proud colonnades !

Yet constantly I see the sunshine break
On tenderer shapes of vines, that wrap great trees,
Reaching lithe stems to foliage far above . . .
And ah ! full sweet the reveries they awake,
While fluttering in their green dependencies,
They cling like woman's trust, like woman's love !

ASTERS.

HUED like the wild-grapes in their yellowing bowers,
Like these, though children of no fervid skies,
You wear the deep rich color of hot Julys,
Of days when cattle pant, when blue storm lowers.
But now in mellow lulls of dreamy hours,
Or when to a random bourne the red leaf flies,
Your stars in delicate clusters gently rise
On autumn's lovely firmament of flowers !

You are bathed in dying summer's purple haze,
Yet winds of rigor to your blooms are dear,
And silvery glimmers of cold sunset lights ;
And where you group in sweet fortuitous ways,
To watch your feathery beauty is to hear
The crickets pleading in the sharp moist nights !

THE GIANTESS.

(FROM THE FRENCH OF CHARLES BAUDELAIRE.)

WHEN primitive nature, through her broad demesne,
Each day for some strange monster travail felt,
Near a young giantess I would fain have dwelt,
Like a voluptuous cat beside a queen.

Her body and soul expanding in grand ways
At terrible sports, I would have gladly seen,
And dreamed that love's own flame sent sombre sheen
Through the moist misty splendors of her gaze.

I would have scanned her towering curves at ease;
Or crawled along the vast slope of her knees;
Or sometimes, if the unwholesome heat had laid

Across the lands her tired form's mighty grace,
I would have drowsed beneath her breast's great shade,
Like some calm hamlet at a mountain's base!

SUICIDE.

I NVISIBLE as a wind along the sky,
She ever wanders o'er the earth immense,
A spirit of beauty but malevolence,
With foot unechoing and with furtive eye.
She loathes and shuns all haunts where peace may lie,
Or love, and every joy engendered thence,
Yet prowls to wait, with wary and avid sense,
For sorrow's heaviest and most burning sigh!

Then, when some dreary sufferer darkly fails
To find in life's chill heaven one starry trace,
One hope no menace of despair assails,
Toward him she steals with sure insidious pace,
And slowly to his desperate look unveils
The maddening glooms and splendors of her face!

SUPPLICATION.

Le doute a désolé la terre ;

Nous en voyons trop ou trop peu. — ALFRED DE MUSSET.

O YE whose footfalls break upon our ears
Persistently, as one by one ye rise
From shadow and into shadow pass, with eyes
Of scorn alike for mortal smiles or tears,
Labors and longings, passions, pains and fears
And all the old solemn cry the old world cries, —
Ye years that wander among us pilgrim-wise,
Give answer, O ye inexorable years !

Nay, answer in the agony of our need
Us worn because of many a baffling thing,
(With only enough of faith to make us bleed
More cruelly under doubt's keen dagger-sting)
Who plead you, and whose tired voices while we plead
Are hoarse with immemorial questioning !

TO WILLIAM PICKERING TALBOYS,

ON HIS DEPARTURE FOR A TOUR ROUND THE WORLD.

I N losing thee, dear friend, I seem to fare
Forth from the lintel of some chamber bright,
Whose lamps with rosy sorcery lend their light
To flowery alcove or luxurious chair ;
Whose burly and glowing logs, of mellow flare,
The happiest converse at their hearth invite,
With many a flash of tawny flame to smite
The Dante in vellum or the bronze Voltaire !

And yet, however stern the estrangement be,
However time with laggard lapse may fret,
That haunt of our fond friendship I shall hold
As loved this hour as when elate I see
Its draperies, dark with absence and regret,
Slide softly back on memory's rings of gold !

INFLUENCES.

WHO has not felt, when twilight sank in cloud,
And winds of autumn past his home gave plaint,
The poverty, the exclusion, the restraint
Of all experience learned or life allowed?
In hours like these, what spirit has not bowed
Before despondence as before a saint
That zealots worship and enthusiasts paint,
Till hope was raimented with death's own shroud?

And yet no more of splendor than some star's
May pierce the gloom and show beyond its rent
The eternities and calms in night's control,
When lo! what hurrying forth from prison bars,
What restitution, what enfranchisement,
What sovereign re-enthronement for the soul!

GRANT DYING.

I THINK the April stars have never shot
O'er the dumb city a light of such cold spell
As now at midnight when all is not well —
When lingering pain is our loved hero's lot!
"Let us have peace," he said, while hate was hot
Still in the land where he stood sentinel
And guardian of its peace, whate'er befell —
He that now sighs for peace yet wins it not!

O thou in whom such calm and power agree,
If immortality may ever dawn
On mortals, of thyself it now were true
That the great spirit of Lincoln looks for thee
Where files of shadowy soldiery are drawn,
Waiting their mighty Captain's last review!

MIDNIGHT, APRIL 6, 1885.

VICTOR HUGO DEAD.

WHEN such a spirit away from earth has fled,
With all his power of deed and of desire,
When now no more the anointed lips respire,
And low at last has drooped the imperial head,
Nature, with whose large liberty was wed
So many a melody that moved his lyre,
Hath fitly bidden her lightning's wings of fire
Pierce the dark sea to tell us he is dead !

And yet, with loftier love for his renown,
O Nature, let thy stars his vigil light,
Thy winds the music of his requiem stir !
Then lift him in thine arms and lay him down
Sublimely where the cloisters of the night
Shall be his archangelic sepulchre !

